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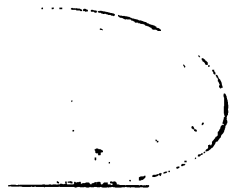
FASHIONABLE LIFE.

BY

MARY H. EASTMAN.



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TO

VIRGINIA,

MY DEAR AND ONLY DAUGHTER,

I DEDICATE

This Volume;

IN WHICH

I HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO DESCRIBE THE OPERA,

THE BALL-ROOM, THE MATINÉE.

THESE, THE HIGHWAYS OF FASHIONABLE LIFE,

ARE OPEN, IN OUR COUNTRY, TO THE MULTITUDE.

I HAVE WANDERED INTO PATHS LESS FREQUENTED,

AND TELL WHAT I HAVE SEEN;

HOPING TO SHOW THE EFFECTS OF A SYSTEM,

IN WHICH PLEASURE IS THE CHIEF AIM,

ON THE HEART AND ON THE DESTINY OF WOMAN.

PREFACE.

SILENCE reigns in the streets. How solemn is the repose of the great city. Afar off, by the woods, there is always quiet. The river, the hills, the groves are never noisy; yet they have a voice in the breeze, or, when God calls in the storm. Calmly the city sleeps; tranquilly, after the tumult of the day.

Hushed are the strivings of the people; the carriages of the rich, the footsteps of the poor no longer disturb me. A breeze is passing from south to north; it has raised the curtains, and is fanning the cheeks of my little ones who are at rest.

The moonlight has entered too, and is reposing by my daughter. She has forgotten every care, though, a few hours ago, it was a rare trouble to decide on the color of a sash. Her right hand is on her heart. Unconscious, she reclines—the type of woman. On her left hand rests her cheek, and over the pillow flows her brown hair. Her lips are parted; she murmurs in her sleep, for she is weary. She turns, and sighs, and turns again. Yet, on every feature is

written health. Why, then, anxiety? She will sleep and be refreshed, against the birth of "another blue day."

A child of my neighbor's has fallen into a sleep from which the arousing is far distant. The resonance of this morning's funeral bells is still in the air; trembling, I bend over the couches of my darlings. My babe! how gentle is his breathing! how exquisite the native grace of his attitude! How lovely his white and rounded limbs!

Alas! for the mother who is weeping, now, at this midnight hour. She looks not for the morning; the grave encloses her lost one. Yet the morning will come.

I have loosed my bracelet from my arm; it lays on the table, its clasp of gold flashing in the gas-light. The hair of the little maiden who is sleeping there, forms its band, and, as I touch a spring, there is, bound with a lock of my own, a golden tress, brighter, it would seem, that the head it once adorned is dust. Yet, "it is well with the child!" So, may the morning come to this desolate mother, who has bent her o'er the dead. Time will teach her to say, It is well.

Standing on the hill of life, for a moment, I turn and look back. I see moving among the shadows of the past, a fair infant. She is playfully commencing the ascent. She sighs, tired with her first

efforts; an angel approaches with wings stretched upward, and bears her to that home, "whither the spirit was to go."

But she who has come a little way—who is still ascending—how will it be with her? Oh! as I look upon her now—the hand on the heart—is it the solemn midnight hour that affrights me with forebodings? Would I that an angel's touch arrested *her* way? No! no! Merciful God! let her pass on! her path is not yet toilsome. She treads lightly in her morning hours. The dew of heaven is on her brow, as she gathers the lilies of the field. Thou hast, as yet, permitted no thorn to pierce her tender feet, and for the history of that heart, still throbbing with the faith of childhood—Thou wilt write it! Her future is with Thee! Oh! sustain her, in the battle of life, from childhood to youth—and onwards!

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"BUT THE WORLD! THE HEART AND MIND OF WOMAN!
EVERY ONE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW SOMETHING
ABOUT THAT."

FASHIONABLE LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

AN OLD FRIEND.

"Then give me also back again the time when I myself was still forming; when a fountain of crowded lays sprung freshly and unbrokenly forth; when mists veiled my world—the bud still promised miracles; when I gathered the thousand flowers which profusely filled all the dales. I had nothing, and yet enough—the intuitive longing after truth, and the pleasure in delusion. Give me back those impulses untamed—the deep pain-fraught happiness, the energy of hatred, the might of love. Give me back my youth."

ONE evening, during a stay of some weeks in New York, after a day of sight-seeing, tired and yet willing to see more, I went into the parlor of the St. Nicholas Hotel. I recognized no one there, so I retired to a sofa in the corner, in order to amuse myself by observing the groups of people that were scattered about the room. There was a lady sitting by the window alone; she was leaning back in her

chair, looking down thoughtfully. I noticed, at a glance, the extreme elegance of her dress, and there was something in the contour and grace of her figure that seemed familiar, carrying me back to other days. This idea fascinated me, and I watched her closely. She sat for a few moments, and then got up as if about to leave the room. As soon as she looked up, I knew her. Eighteen years had not so changed the beautiful school-girl, Laura Edwards, but that she could be identified in Mrs. Searle, of Boston. I hastened to speak to her, for we had been dear friends when young, though, until now, we had never met since our separation at boarding-school. We had, however, kept up a sort of intercourse, by letter and by messages, and I had recently received an invitation from her, to come to Boston, and pay her a visit, that we might renew our friendship. She received me with great affection when I spoke to her, and her countenance, glowing with pleasure, verified her words.

"How happy I am to see you again," she said, holding my hand, when we were seated together on the sofa; "in this long time that has passed since we left school, how much has happened. We thought, when we said good-by to our studies, that only pleasure was in store for us. But we, some of us, at least, have found out our mistake. You have been

one of the fortunate ones; all your dreams of life have come true."

"Not all," I said, smiling; "but many of them."

"What a merry set of girls we were," she said, in a tone of voice that showed she liked to look back; "but," and the voice changed, "think of the destinies of some of us. Anna Hayes died young; Margaret Young is dead, and was at one time insane; two of us are widows, Marcia Ellet and I; the others are scattered far and wide."

"Does Marcia live in Boston?" I asked.

"Yes, and she has two lovely daughters; the care of their education has occupied her time, and satisfied her heart too, for she is so devoted to them, that she has no wish for other society. I am the worst off of all, for my life has been so aimless."

"Yet," said I, "you have much that is to be desired. How perfectly you have retained your health, or your beauty could not have been so well preserved; then, you have many friends, and your wealth, *that* can purchase you *some* happiness, for you can spend it to the benefit of others."

"Oh! as to that," she answered, "my name heads half the charitable lists in Boston, and yet my happiness has been, at most, a negative one. I have never had enough to love. I was, in one month, a bride and a widow. Wasn't this enough to darken my life?"

Her eyes filled with tears as she said this, but she did not look very much as if her life had been darkened. She was the sweetest representation of middle age. Her white neck and falling shoulders were still very handsome, and her dress, cut low, displayed a bust that a young woman might envy. The color was continually deepening or fading in her cheek, as she spoke, and the lines in her face had not yet threatened to become wrinkles. Then, there was the old dimple, to which so much of the fascination of her smile was owing. One rarely sees so beautiful an arm and hand as she had, and diamonds flashed in her bracelet and in the clasp of the belt that she wore about her waist. She was lovely, graceful, and interesting; had fine talents, and unless intercourse with the world had spoiled her, she had a true and noble heart. As she spoke of her darkened life, the tears that had gathered in her brilliant eyes fell slowly, but in a moment, all trace of them had been wiped away. They might be considered as the tribute paid by a woman of the world to fond and pure recollections of her early life. Soon she was talking gayly of other things, and the great sorrow was set aside.

"How fortunate I am to be in New York at this time," she said, "though the cause of my being here is one that gives me great anxiety. You will be interested in it; for you could not see, without interest,

the daughter of Margaret Young, were it only for her mother's sake."

"It will be a great pleasure to see her. Is she here now?"

"She is out this evening," Mrs. Searle said, "but at present she is under my care; she lives with me, and I look upon her as my own child. She is a lovely girl, far prettier than ever her mother was, but she is very much out of health. I came to New York entirely on her account, to give her the benefit of change of scene."

"Her mother has been dead some time," I said —"about two years?"

"Just two years; did you ever hear her history?"

"I heard something of her marrying Mr. Hamilton unwillingly, and it has been said that she was once engaged to Mr. Murray, who is a friend of my husband. Some think that his never having married is in consequence of his attachment to Margaret."

"No doubt of it," said Mrs. Searle, "and it is very pleasant to believe so; I have not outlived my romantic notions, and think that for every man or woman one great passion should suffice."

"Did Mrs. Hamilton leave but this one child?" I asked.

"She left three," said Mrs. Searle; "two daughters and a son; the youngest daughter died, soon after

her mother, of scarlet fever. Mr. Hamilton, almost broken hearted by his double affliction, determined to go to Europe, and he has taken his son, intending to have him educated in Germany, or in England.

"I was with Mrs. Hamilton when she died. She was resigned to suffer a great deal, and was satisfied to die; she was never a happy woman, and her long illness assisted to wean her from life; besides, she was a very religious person. Her great and only care seemed to be for Irene, the daughter that is with me. I begged her to give Irene to me, from the time that her illness promised to terminate fatally. Mr. Hamilton was quite indifferent about it; he is always polite to Irene, but I never saw him caress her; when he speaks to her there is even a reserve of manner that is unaccountable. Irene worships her father, whom, personally, she resembles exceedingly, and she is everything that is lovely and good; she is a girl of genius, and her mind has been cultivated to a remarkable degree, when you remember how young she is. I have often, when I have been at the Grove (which is the name of Mr. Hamilton's residence on the Hudson), I have often thought I would try and account for Mr. Hamilton's treating Irene so differently from his other children. Little Margaret was his darling, and as for the son, he is in a fair way to be made good for nothing by excessive indulgence."

"Mrs. Hamilton, then, left her daughter to your care," I said.

"Yes, after some hesitation; she made one objection to me, and that was, my too great fondness for the world. I have always been a worshipper of mammon, in a measure; the truth is, I have no family, and my home, until Irene came, was often gloomy, so I have gone into gay society more than I would otherwise. I made Mrs. Hamilton a great many promises, told her I would go regularly to church, and always take Irene, for I was so delighted at the idea of having an adopted daughter, that I would have promised anything. So she consented, and assured me that her husband would make no objection to our scheme, on the contrary, he appeared to be more than satisfied. He does not neglect his daughter—is desirous she should have everything to make her happy; and writes to her occasionally, but his letters are short and constrained in their style. He does not limit her as regards spending-money, for she can have as much as she pleases. In a letter that I had from him the other day, he entreats me, in every way, to provide for her happiness, and adds, that if at any time I desire to be relieved of my charge, to inform him, that he may return to the country and make suitable arrangements for her, but, he does not offer to take her with him; and when you see Irene, you will be

astonished at this. But, though all this is true and strange, he cannot be said to have been regardless of her. He has cultivated her talents by giving her the best masters. She speaks Spanish and French with great ease, and is a most delightful musician; she plays equally well on the piano and the harp; indeed, she has a perfect passion for music, though lately I can hardly induce her to play a note; she sings, too, charmingly."

"Her mother, if I recollect right, had no fondness for music. What were the circumstances attending the breaking of her engagement with Mr. Murray?" I asked.

"Oh! it was Mr. Young's fault; he was a man of such strong feelings and prejudices, and he hated the Murrays, with whom he had some difficulty at law, and the Murrays gained the suit. It was an unimportant one, but Mr. Young was a proud man, and never forgave an injury; such people are particularly unforgiving when they are in the wrong. He was indignant that any member of the Murray family should dare to aspire to his daughter. When Algernon Murray came to Georgia, he and Margaret met at some house in the neighborhood, and from the first hour of their acquaintance they were interested in each other; after that, they were constantly together. Mr. Young did not choose to notice this for a time; some said he hated the Murrays so, that

he let the affair go on purposely, delighted at the idea of being able to retaliate upon the son the injuries done him by the father."

"But," said I, "he forgot that his daughter's happiness was at stake."

"If he remembered, he did not care," said Mrs. Searle; "his conduct after this showed it. The Murray family called upon Mr. Young and his daughter, and hoped the old troubles were forgotten. When Algernon asked his permission to address Margaret, confessing that he had already made known to her his attachment, and that she returned it, he refused him in the most positive manner, though he did not forbid their friendly intercourse being continued; this, of course, induced the young people to hope, and every day they became more devoted to each other. Again Algernon Murray used every argument to soften Mr. Young, but he might as well have addressed himself to a rock. Margaret, who, though amiable, possessed some of her father's inflexibility of purpose, refused to break her engagement; and at this, Mr. Young was so enraged, that he forbade Algernon the house, and never let Margaret go out of his sight. I believe that if Margaret had been dying at his feet, he would not have yielded, if, by doing so, her life would have been saved. So it went on; Margaret persisted in declaring she would never give Algernon up, and Mr.

Young was equally determined she should never marry him; all the time Algernon Murray remained at his father's, embracing every chance to get a line or a message to Margaret, and writing to the father until he saw *that* was of no use, for his letters were returned to him unopened; then, he thought, for the present, he would be quiet.

"You have not forgotten," continued Mrs. Searle, "that I was a ward of old Mr. Murray's, and that I lived with him until my marriage; Margaret and I returning from school together; so I knew all that was going on. Algernon Murray had been pious for several years; he began to think on religious subjects at West Point. Bishop McIlvaine, during the short time that he was chaplain there, many years ago, produced a great impression on the minds of the cadets, and his preaching was the means of the conversion of a number, while others never forgot the effective arguments he used to induce them to commence a religious life. Among his converts there, now living, are several bishops of the Episcopal Church. I have often heard Algernon speak on this subject, and he dates his first religious emotions to the preaching of Bishop McIlvaine. After he graduated at the academy, he went to Europe, and returned much improved; he was certainly one of the most interesting persons that I ever met, handsome and engaging in his man-

ners, and he had a faculty of attracting any one with whom he conversed; for, besides talking well, he was a good listener, and you felt that he was interested in all that concerned you; so it is not to be wondered at that poor Margaret loved him so much.

"I am making you a long story, but it is a true one. One morning, Algernon received a note from Mr. Young, begging an interview with him. He went over in high spirits, for he thought Margaret's unhappiness had softened her father, and that all would be as he wished. When he came home, we saw, by his looks, that it was otherwise, but we did not question him; his mother afterwards told me what had passed. Mr. Young had been rude and insulting; he told him of a note that he had written Margaret, that he had got hold of, and that it was to no purpose that he attempted to renew his addresses, for he had determined on such a course as would break up the whole affair; he sneered at his want of proper spirit in being anxious to enter a family that was unwilling to receive him; he reminded him of his religious profession, and said that there was an estrangement between himself and his daughter, the result of her acquaintance with him; the world, he added, would judge rightly of a religion that actuated him to instigate a child to rebellion against her parent. This allusion to his religious profession

was particularly distressing to Algernon, for he was constantly afraid of saying or doing something calculated to place the profession that he made in an unfavorable light before the world. Mr. Young charged Margaret's unhappiness upon him, but said *that* was a mere derangement of the nervous system, that he should take her away from home, and when separated, she would soon forget him. He would not consent to an interview between him and Margaret, but called upon him as a man of honor, to withdraw his addresses, as to his shame, he was obliged to acknowledge, Margaret wished the engagement to be continued, and he wound up by declaring that not only should there be no marriage, but that he would never forgive his daughter or treat her with kindness, until the affair was entirely done with. Algernon was very much distressed, and hardly knew what to do at first, but all the members of his family were highly indignant at Mr. Young's behavior, and they persuaded him to write to Margaret, and withdraw from the engagement. He did so, but was unhappy after it; nothing seemed, for a time, to interest him; I was always certain that he regretted taking this step, for if he had waited a year or two, Margaret would have been of age, and, under the circumstances, she and Algernon would have been justified in braving Mr. Young's displeasure; indeed, Mrs. Murray told me that her son al-

ways blamed himself for acting so hastily, but Margaret's marriage to Mr. Hamilton was hurried on so, that he had no chance of repairing his error, if you can call it one. Mr. Young dragged Margaret off to New York, much against her wishes, and the poor girl was worried into her marriage. I think Margaret was to blame to marry, when her whole heart was given up to another, but she was so angry with Algernon for giving her up, and offended pride had a good deal to do with her accepting Mr. Hamilton. She thought that if she were willing to brave her father's anger, Algernon might have done it too; if he had ever asked her to marry him in spite of her father's objections, I know she would not have hesitated. Afterwards, Mr. Young would sneeringly speak of Algernon's having resigned her so easily, and he would declare this was a proof that he had never really loved her. He made Margaret go everywhere with him in New York; to balls, and operas, and all gay places, and somehow or other he got her to agree to the marriage with Mr. Hamilton. I suppose she thought she would have no peace until she did so, and she was quite worn out. She was disappointed that Algernon made no effort to see her or write to her, and thus, as is often the case, mortified pride and affection united to hurry a woman on to her fate. She was married in New York, and I was her bridesmaid, for I had

passed that winter in New York, and we had been a great deal together."

"What sort of a person was Mr. Hamilton?" I asked, "was he worthy of her?"

"Oh, yes; in every respect but one. He is very wealthy, and is a man of the highest intellectual attainments, but he is an infidel. I am told his father was one also. To me, this would have been a great objection; Mr. Young, however, did not care for it, and Margaret did not think of it at all, at the time, but since, it has been a great sorrow to her. The truth is, Margaret had but one idea then—Algernon Murray; wasn't it dreadful she should have married Mr. Hamilton? She was often in low spirits, but when in gay company she would become animated, and was very much admired. She had no great beauty, but she managed, or rather, she *did not manage*, to make every one love her. It was so, you remember, at school."

"Margaret had a very superior mind," I said, "and when a woman is gifted with an *extra*ordinary mind, she invariably has a greater influence than a man who is similarly endowed."

CHAPTER II.

MARGARET HAMILTON.

Oh how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day.

"HAVE you found it so?" said Mrs. Searle. "It seems to me that it is just the contrary. Women, so often, are not appreciated."

"Perhaps you have observed that once or twice, and take it for granted that it is always so, but I think not. Even women of ordinary intellect accomplish a great deal by a certain tact, and frequently, a woman of inferior mind has the greatest, and the worst influence on those around her. I know men that have changed so much since their marriage, for the worse, that I attribute it to their wives, although the latter are women of no ability."

"How do you account for this?" said Mrs. Searle.

"In a very matter of fact way; from the influence of association, and the power of the affections. However, Margaret seems not to have been influenced by

Mr. Hamilton in her opinions, for you say she became a religious woman."

"Yes; but again, Mr. Hamilton was never influenced by her in this respect; according to your theory, he ought to have been."

"Not at all," I said; "she never loved him; had she loved him, as women are supposed to love their husbands, the result might have been very different."

"She never loved him," said Mrs. Searle; "though I will do her all justice; after her marriage she tried to make him happy; if she could not feel as he wished, she endeavored to *act* so as to give him pleasure."

"Did he know of Margaret's attachment to Mr. Murray?" I asked, "previous to his marriage?"

"Oh! yes; Margaret concealed nothing, and she told him she never could love him as he deserved, but Mr. Young persuaded him that Margaret, once his wife, could not fail to overcome any lingering feelings of attachment she might have for Algernon, and that she would be cheerful and happy again. Mr. Hamilton was so much in love with her, that he was willing to take the chance, but it was a fearful one. He has been the most devoted, excellent husband, and his affection has been greatly tried, for after the marriage, things went on badly. The wedding was the gloomiest one I ever saw; I never

wept such tears for another as I did for Margaret, that morning; she hardly knew where she was, and was as pale as her pearls, and as motionless. I saw tears in the eyes of more than one who knew her first love affair, and we all wondered that Mr. Hamilton desired the marriage under the circumstances; but people are so apt to think things will be as they wish them."

"Yet," said I, "such a marriage is dreadful; Margaret was much to blame to take so lightly upon her those solemn vows. And her father—oh! how much have they to answer for, who constrain the affections when they should be permitted to flow on. Poor Margaret. I am sorry to hear so sad an account of her!"

"Oh! she had a miserable fate," said Mrs. Searle; "think of her long imprisonment in an insane asylum; but it was right to place her there, for eventually she recovered, and lived a useful, if not a happy life, for a number of years. You live near Algernon Murray, tell me about him; it is so long since I have seen him. Is he cheerful?"

"Yes; but I should not characterize him as a gay person; he is a sort of bookworm, but is a very pious and useful man. He left the army long ago, and lives on his plantation. He could not help being cheerful, for religion, to which he is so devoted, would make him so, had he nothing else. But

he is thoughtful always; too much so, some think. I never heard him speak of Mrs. Hamilton; persons generally avoid alluding to her—to him. How long ago did Mr. Young die?"

"Oh! years; he died when Margaret was in the asylum, and his was a wretched death-bed; it is not surprising that remorse embittered the last hours of his life. A few weeks before his death he begged me to go and see Margaret, and bring him a true account of her condition; I could not, then, encourage him with hopes of her recovery. He wept very much, and I knew that his proud spirit was broken. He and Margaret lie, side by side, at Greenwood."

"But he repented, I hope. Did he make no preparation for eternity as he approached it?"

"I do not know," said Mrs. Searle; "when his symptoms assumed a fatal appearance, a friend entreated him to permit a clergyman to be sent for. He made no objection, and one soon arrived; but in the mean time he had become insensible, and during the few hours that he survived, showed no signs of consciousness. The prayers for the dying were read at his bedside; may we not hope that God heard them?"

"I trust so," I replied, "but God has told us to live aright to gain heaven. A death-bed is not the place to make the soul white from the stains of sin,

yet, the shadow of the cross has rested even there. Our sins affect others. Forcing his daughter into a marriage in which her affections were not interested, how could he expect her to be a good and true wife?"

"She was," said Mrs. Searle; "in her conduct, Margaret was the perfect wife; and if, in her heart, her early love lingered, in spite of herself, it was not her fault. She was cruelly dealt by; who can blame her?"

"We have no right even to judge her," I said; "but now tell me of her daughter?"

"I hardly know how to tell you of my great anxiety for her; she has an excellent constitution, and I have no fear of any bodily disease, but her nervous system is already suffering from the unnatural excitement in which she lives, and unless there is soon a change, she will become a victim of her delusion; she is a spiritualist."

"A spiritualist!" I repeated; "how can it be! a girl of talent, you say, and of fine education, how can she believe in anything so absurd as this new theory?"

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Searle, "that I am to blame in a measure, for it, though I did all for the best; and now I am trying to turn her mind from it, but, it's of no use. Spiritualism is, just now, the fashion in Boston, and we can go no-

where without hearing it discussed. Its adherents are among the learned, the educated, and the religious, though the greatest number are impostors, who would do anything to turn a penny. It is astonishing what a hold this nonsensical doctrine has taken on a mass of the people. When Irene came to me, spiritualism was the frequent subject of conversation in my house as in every house in Boston. I was glad to see Irene take an interest in anything, for she had been so perfectly wretched from the loss of her mother, and had I permitted her, she would have stayed forever in her room, to dwell upon her loss. It distressed me beyond everything to see her so. She had her mother's Bible, and she often read in it, but oftener cried over it. I got some young people to visit her, but she did not take the least interest in their society. I tried to induce her to renew her regular course of study, but she could not. Her music was forgotten, and I really was afraid the poor child would die of grief, for all of her employments were given up and her health began to be affected. All my friends took the greatest interest in her, and one of them, Professor Johnson, loves her as well, I believe, as if she were his own. He can't pass a day without seeing a great deal of her, and he and his wife came here with us. Another gentleman who visits me, but I do not like him, is Mr. Walker, a great

spiritualist; he is a man of a great deal of talent of a certain sort, and he has a way of fascinating people, as cats do birds, that he may make them do as he wishes. He failed with me, but he succeeded with Irene. I cannot endure him; he is a mesmerist, and can, at any time, throw Irene into a mesmeric sleep, though I have put a stop to this. Well, he has converted my poor Irene to spiritualism."

"How, then, can you blame yourself?"

"Oh! because, at first I encouraged Irene to take an interest in it. Having no sympathy with the subject myself, I did not consider what might be the effect on a mind naturally enthusiastic and devotional, and on feelings so sensitive and intense as hers. If Irene cares at all for a thing, she throws her whole soul into it; if she love a person, she does it passionately and without the least reserve. She is either indifferent or devoted. When her sister's death followed her mother's, I was in despair at the effect it had upon her; and as spiritualism was the only thing that roused her from her grief, I took her where it was discussed, and where all these table movings and knockings are going on. I never dreamed that the consequences could be as they are. Sometimes, Irene is quite cheerful, fancying that her mother and sister are about her, and she tells me all sorts of things about interviews with them. She

gets angry with me because I do not believe any of it. She sleeps in the room adjoining mine, and is very restless; half her nights are spent in the indulgence of these wretched fancies. Mr. Walker calls them trances or ecstasies, or some such nonsense, but Dr. Thomas assures me she is suffering from a diseased state of mind, the result of excessive grief."

"How anxious you must be about her," I said; "but, of course, you do not permit her to go to these meetings or circles now?"

"I cannot prevent it; she has gone to one to-night, at a private house. Irene is so modest that she shrinks from any sort of publicity, but she is a medium *of the highest order;* Mr. Walker calls her so. When she is in the cataleptic state, as *I* call it, questions are addressed through her to the dead; sometimes remarkable coincidences have occurred in her answers."

"How dreadful! but as Irene is under your charge, do you not feel it a duty to restrain her from going to such places?"

"How can I? Irene is eighteen years old, and she is not always in the condition I have been describing. Generally, she is the most interesting girl you ever saw, so affectionate in her ways. But, if I hint at preventing her from seeing her spiritualist friends, or say anything against her faith, she be-

comes so excited that I am glad to see her calm again by promising she shall do as she pleases. She says that if I write to her father about it, she will go where we can never again see or hear from her. We have to be very gentle with her, for she will not bear contradiction. Dr. Thomas advised me to come here with her, and in a little while he will come over, for a day, to see us. Professor Johnson and his wife are spiritualists, after a fashion, and Irene is with them this evening."

"What a pity that she should be under their influence, then."

"Oh! as to that, Mrs. Johnson cannot do her any harm, for she is the silliest woman that ever lived, though she is one of the strong minded, believes in woman's rights, and would be a Bloomer if the Professor had not threatened a divorce as soon as she assumes the dress. She never could influence Irene, and the Professor is only inquiring into spiritualism as he does into everything; he will soon drop it."

"Yet he has taken her out to-night, to a circle."

"She would go," said Mrs. Searle; "some one from Boston, Mr. Walker, no doubt, wrote to Dr. James, of this city, who is a spiritualist, about Irene, and the Doctor comes here to invite her to meet a few friends at his house, where the subject will be talked about. Irene said positively, she would go, and the

Professor tried, at my request, to dissuade her, but to no purpose. However, the Professor thinks it a service to Irene to go, rather than an injury, by employing her thoughts. But he is mistaken."

"One question more," I said: "How does all this affect Irene in one respect—does she read her Bible as much as formerly?"

"No; I used to take the Bible from her hands, for I wanted her to read something more cheerful, but I never have to do so now. Books about spirits have taken the place of her mother's Bible; *that* is rarely opened. There comes the Professor—I know his step."

CHAPTER III.

IRENE.

"I took it for a fairy vision."

THE Professor stood for a moment, at the door, looking for Mrs. Searle; as soon as he saw her, he came quickly towards her. "I see you have waited for us," he said. "Have you been impatient? is it very late?"

"No," said Mrs. Searle. "Let me introduce you to an old friend of mine." The Professor bowed. "Talking with her has made the time fly. My poor Irene! why did you let her stay so late?"

"How could I prevent it?" said the Professor. "When I insisted upon her coming home, if you could have seen her look, and heard her say 'Ah! Professor.' I am so constituted that I can refuse nothing to a beautiful woman."

"Then you should have done what *I* asked you, and brought Irene to me at ten o'clock. How is

she? has she been in the spiritual world to-night, and have you been in the seventh heavens, eating those curious pears that Mr. Walker says grow up there?"

"Not yet," said the Professor, "and Irene has done very well. I persuaded her not to act as medium, though every one was anxious that she should. You said it made her ill the last time she did so. You will not be convinced that spiritualism is to Irene a new subject of thought."

"You are mistaken," said Mrs. Searle. "It is the old one differently contemplated; it is still death. How can you say any service has been rendered her, when you heard Dr. Thomas tell me that he trembled for her mind if there were not a change in her very soon."

"Look how she was before she thought about spiritualism," said the Professor. "It was horrible to see a young person in such a state of hopeless grief, and it lasted a year. I thought then she would certainly lose her mind. So do not charge spiritualism with being the occasion of your anxiety."

"I think," said I to Mrs. Searle, "that it was a pity you took the Bible away."

"I do not object to the Bible," said Mrs. Searle, "though I do not read it as much as I ought, but I thought it would be better for Irene to go into so-

ciety. She looked so frail, and how could it be otherwise, moping forever in her room, mourning over what could not be changed. I took refuge in the world from my own sorrows, that were as hard to bear as hers. Here they come! What detained them so long in the hall?"

"Some ladies," said the Professor, "to whom Mrs. Johnson was giving a sketch of the evening's entertainment. Madam," he continued, looking at me, "there is the object of Mrs. Searle's anxiety. Does she look very ill?"

The two ladies came forward, Irene rather slowly, so that I was introduced to Mrs. Johnson before Irene was near enough for Mrs. Searle to speak to her; and as she stood a moment, seeing her friends occupied with a stranger, I had an opportunity of observing her. Are there not, with every one, recollections of persons that leave upon our memories the impression that is made by the appearance of a figure looking upon us in a dream? Such is my remembrance of Irene, and the illusion appears stronger from the style of dress that she had assumed. It was entirely white, and of a thin material like gauze. I afterwards found that when not thus attired, she wore the deepest black. It was the only peculiarity she had, if anything she said or did could be considered peculiar, for everything was charming,

everything was natural with her. Her first appearance called to my mind the lines,

> "Ere thou wast born into this breathing world
> God wrote some characters upon thy heart."

The impression stayed by me; even spiritualism, when she talked of it, seemed pure and good, though I knew it was not true. Now, when I think of her, it is as at the first, until the remembrance of what followed places her before me in a different attitude.

Mrs. Searle said a few words to her before introducing me; I heard her mention her mother's name, and supposed she told her that, in early life, I was her friend. For this, I received from the lovely girl a glance full of earnestness and affection, while I observed the feeling that an allusion to her mother called up. The color, gradually collecting like evening clouds, passed over her face, and then settled in a deep, rich bloom on either cheek. She sat down by me, and said gently and in the sweetest tone of voice, as she put her little hand in mine, "you were my mother's friend; mine you must be too."

The suddenness of the appeal, and the beauty of the vision before me, for, had I not touched her hand I might have believed her to be a vision, overcame me. Then, the thought came, an apprehension for the young creature who asked me to be her friend, who was, apparently, so rich in earthly bless-

ings. How distinctly I remember her! Those dark gray eyes, with their long sweep of lashes, the harmony of each feature with the other, the exquisite complexion, the long black tresses (heavy and rich as those of the maidens of the far off isles), all gathered up as they were into a band on the back of her head. I looked at her as I would at a picture, and I soon lost this first feeling of oppression, she was so beautiful. I looked down at the hand that still lay in mine; its beauty a sculptor might wish to ravish. No ring disfigured the perfect fingers, no bracelet disturbed the line of beauty that shaped her arm. She wore no ornament; but in the folds of her dark hair drooped the cups of a lily of the valley, and there in its purity and innocent beauty, it looked at home.

"Well," said the Professor, who had been observing me, "what do you think of Irene? does she look as if she had been in bad company?"

"I am quite satisfied with her looks," I said, "but while I am here, I do not intend to spare her, even to you. I must have her all to myself."

At that moment my husband came in; he had been engaged all day with business, and was very tired. I only detained him long enough to introduce him to Mrs. Searle and her friends, with whom, before I left them for the night, I had arranged to visit many places of interest the next day.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER FRIEND.

"Describe him who can!"

I CAME to like the Professor; so much, that it is a real pleasure to sit here and think of him. He was a spiritualist, but he has abjured his wild dreams. He is a graduate of Harvard, and has always lived in Boston, that is, his home is there, but he often visits other places, and everywhere he makes friends. He was educated to be a lawyer, but his mother left him one hundred thousand dollars, and he abandoned the law. Thus, with ample means, and abundant leisure, without seeming to accomplish much, he is never idle. Everything that is going on, interests him, more or less. He looks into all the ologies, and finds out the secret springs of every ism that comes along, and he is well armed with his good sense, good education, good principles, and good temper. He thinks nothing beneath his notice until he has inquired into it, and found out its worthless-

ness; then, he throws it aside forever. Such men are extremely useful in society, for though they never accomplish anything great, they are serviceable in little things, of which, after all, life is principally made up.

The Professor has many qualifications, which, in our day, may be deemed necessary for one to possess, in some degree, to be agreeable. He loves poetry, and his acquaintance with it is neither superficial nor limited. He is in constant intercourse with Shakspeare, Milton, Chaucer, and others who wrote in the age when the spirit of poesy sprung forth in youth and vigor. He is endowed with so admirable a memory that he can recite a great part of what they have written. He likes to repeat the rhymes of the city poet Pope, who attained such perfection in the use of language as to afford a harvest of pleasure in a barren age. But he loves most to linger with those who sung instigated by the magnetic impulse given to poetry in the nineteenth century. He sits in the shadow of his own trees, and goes with Wordsworth on his Excursion, follows the stream of song as it gushes from the heart of Goethe, and repeats the exquisite songs of Tennyson and of Keats with a pathos that proves they find a response in his own soul. He is full of poetry; yet he never wrote a line; acting wisely in using his gift to appreciate others, and never thinking to enter the arena with

those whose works satisfy his heart. For does not poetry deal with the heart, and can that be called poetry, that, however it charms the ear by its perfect measure, and its management of incident and of thought, ceases there—arousing no sensibility, waking up no power in the soul that, though sleeping, is still alive.

As for the poets of his own country, and his own age, the Professor knows most of them and loves them all. Some of them were his school friends; together they rambled in the woods, fished in the streams, and explored the mountains of New England. Together they studied the languages, and history, and overcame the difficulty of angle and triangle; and they talked, as youths will talk, of the never failing themes, suggestive of argument, drawn from classic lore, until they parted. The Professor delights in the emanations of his gifted friends, as they brighten our own land and go forth to the world—beaming, beside the rays of other living children of poetry. Their fame to him is dear; he knows so well, to their very depths, the hearts from which their verses spring.

The Professor loves history; he is curious as to his race, to know from whence it has come, how it has journeyed on, and what is its final destination. He wonders if it indeed be true that man was created by the word of power, coming from nothing, and

what is the eternity into which he must pass. And so, I cannot call the Professor a Christian; he says he believes in the truths of revealed religion, but he reads and lays the book aside. He admires in it, the incident, the language, the morality, the poetry; but of the revivifying influence that it will work on the soul, he knows not.

It was the working of his poetic nature that guided him to the hall where spiritualism was discussed, when he was still grieving over the loss of two little girls, his only children. The frantic grief of his wife had long ago been quieted, or lost, in the gayeties of fashion; her children were not forgotten, but her sorrow was laid aside. Not so with the father. He ever missed from his bosom the little heads, that, as he studied, were so often pillowed there; he missed their songs, their talk, their enjoyment of life. He could not be submissive to part with them, and long after the marble monument rose over their bodies, he loved to cheat himself by the fancy that they were still about him, that they would come back to him, to be folded to his heart. He found his philosophy inadequate to afford him consolation. Rebellious under the dispensation, he was like one standing in the dark, seizing the first object that was near, to obtain guidance and assistance. A careless glance at spiritualism invited him to a deeper consideration of it; he loved to think of

his little ones as guiding his path, or like angels hovering about his bed; there was nothing, that he could see, to prevent this from being true, and in the hope that it might be so, he chose to investigate it. Every age has its mystery, and nothing new, he argued, since the discovery and application of electricity, should be rejected as impossible; and a man should not reject what he cannot disprove. So the Professor went to all the "circles," and was often seen in the company of spiritualists. Many heard with surprise and disgust that such a man was falling, another victim to the new delusion, while the Professor quietly went on with his inquiry, and though not a spiritualist, knew he was classed among them.

CHAPTER V.

A LEARNED LADY.

Without, or with offence to friends or foes,
I sketch the world exactly as it goes.

THE Professor's wife is a spiritualist, and openly avows, or rather loudly proclaims it. She asserts her opinions, and her rights, so as all the world may hear. She would have women doctors, preachers, and (would you believe it?) lawyers; and at one time, nothing but her husband's prohibition prevented her from assuming the Bloomer costume. From a love of peace, the Professor rarely interferes with his wife's notions, but when he does interfere, it is with a determination of a similar nature with that that induced Snowdon's knight to plant himself against the rock, and intimate its removal before his own.

Mrs. Johnson is a learned lady, educated, after the straitest sect, a Bostonian. Persuaded that there is nothing good out of Boston, she rarely leaves

that city for recreation or improvement in other places. She is a sort of Jesuit about education; no one can be saved (from utter ignorance) that has not been educated in Boston; while everything that is taught there, must be good and true.

Mrs. Johnson believes in everything new; forever tiring of the last thing, whether an opinion or a dress. Every month she has a new bonnet, and commences attending a course of lectures on a new theme, and as her health requires a constant change of nice dishes on the table, throughout the year, her mind must be stimulated by an incessant variety. Mention a study with which she had not become acquainted, more *or less*, at school! and she can, at all times, talk down an opponent, on any question of science or of art. Her mind is a sort of ladle that is always dipping into everything, but it never brings up a teaspoonful; there is, so to speak, a continual waste. She never gains a new idea; I have known other such women, and not a few, but Mrs. Johnson is particularly indefatigable in running after nothing.

Once botany was her passion; this lasted until a very beautiful conservatory was built, and stored with rare and exquisite plants. These, fading and neglected, soon yellowed and drooped within, and if a visitor looked through the windows, the idea of a pestilence among the flowers was inevitably sug-

gested, until the Professor, from mere pity and goodness of heart, took them under his charge, providing them with a physician and nurse in the person of a gardener, and when health and freshness were restored, continued him in charge, to prevent a recurrence of the old symptoms.

Conchology succeeded botany; the consequence of a present of some handsome shells from a good-hearted navy cousin, who collected them in memory of the good dinners he had eaten at the house of his literary relative. The lady perambulated Boston in search of more shells, pored over their history in books, had shelves put up, with glass fronts, in different parts of the house, and arranged and classed them, she thought, with scientific skill. But, happening to see the performance of some educated canaries, she passed from shells to birds, with the velocity of an eagle flying from the sea-shore to his nest in the clouds. She purchased birds, at any price, and imprisoned them in costly cages; some died and were replaced by others that languished in their gilded homes; but their mistress persevered until the flowers, among which the cages hung, were alive with music, and the little songsters' happy notes made the listener think their wire houses were as pleasant as their native groves. But the old nervous headaches came back, and the lady hated the sun that the birds loved; the poor little prisoners

languished, and their sweet notes failed. The inhuman cat that had once been her mistress' favorite, and had been banished from her boudoir during the reign of the birds, knew her mistress' fickle nature, and she waited for her mood to change, watching for her chance; so this whim had a bloody end; there were a succession of catastrophes, and the cages, no longer of any use, were sent to auction.

Phrenology had a short but splendid reign, during the lives of the little children, whose heads were forever being examined, and whose feet were always running from the skulls that grinned at them from hall and chamber. Then came mineralogy, and then—but time fails me to tell them all. In the mean time, the *soirées* of the learned lady were always crowded. Some went for the refreshments; some, from curiosity; some, because they liked the Professor, and some, to laugh at his wife, who, flounced and perfumed, with heightened color, and literary curls, passed among her guests, showing them this picture and that book, a specimen of coal or an autograph—whatever came before her, or was uppermost in her jumbled, crowded brain.

Last of all came spiritualism; with what delight she received the new doctrine. She thought the mysteries of death were unveiled for her especial gratification; at any rate, she did not mind intruding on its sanctity; nothing shocked, nothing appalled

her. She gave credence to every vagary, hearing and repeating ghost stories, detailing death-bed scenes, and the spiritual miracles that were performed there.

She has now attained fanaticism, having dismissed the little degree of truth, reason, or common sense that ever influenced her. Destitute of such elements of mind as would perceive a holiness and solemnity in what concerns the condition of the loved and lost, she is actuated by a vulgar curiosity, in her consideration of it. Thus she invades the sanctuary of eternal things, and profanes their holy altars with an earthly touch. She cannot be sincere; fanaticism, though often deceived, is never sincere.

CHAPTER VI.

YOUTH IN SHADOW.

Angels attend thee! may their wings
Fan every shadow from thy brow.

But Irene, young, pure in heart, beautiful and intellectual, believes it all. She is too diffident to be at all conscious of her own attainments; to one kind of knowledge she will confess.

She is Irene the sorrowing; I seem to hear her say, breaking the midnight silence, standing in her white dress before me, looking at me with her earnest eyes:—

In grief we are not all unlearned;
Once through our own doors Death did pass,
One went, who never hath returned.

"Dark, irrecoverably dark, is the soul's eye," and yet, when I first saw her, over her young head was resting the shadow of the future. I heard a voice calling her, prophetic and dirge-like. Gentle, and loving, and good, she is like a star wandering in the unsurveyed heavens; she has wandered into darkness. Bewildered—is she lost? May we not bring her back? She lives—is there not hope?

CHAPTER VII.

SPIRITUALISM.

Grim reader! did you ever see a ghost?

MRS. Searle pressed upon my acceptance a seat in the carriage she had taken during her stay in New York, and Irene always went with us in our drives, in and about the city; the Professor generally accompanied us, and his society was far more desirable than that of his wife, who, fortunately for us, whenever Mrs. Searle invited her to join our party, had an engagement either with a mortal or a spirit. I was amazed, on one occasion, when Mrs. Searle told her we were going to a picture shop, to look at a fine collection of engravings that had just been received, to hear her say that Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were to meet her, by appointment, at the house of an acquaintance.

"How can that be?" said Mrs. Searle, "for in the morning's papers I read that a great convocation of spirits was to be held in Cincinnati to-day, and these

two patriots were to deliver addresses, and among the hearers would be Rousseau, Voltaire, and Tom Paine. Are your spirits omnipresent, or do those that have the hiring of them out manage badly?"

"You have so little faith," said Mrs. Johnson, "or rather you have none in spiritualism, it is not worth while to throw away argument on you."

"But I desire to be enlightened."

"Go to the 'circles,' then," Mrs. Johnson said; "you can see and hear enough there to convince you."

"Mrs. Johnson, I am very hard to be convinced when spiritualism is the subject; I went to a circle the other evening, where I was infinitely disgusted. I heard a person tell a marvellous story of himself; he says that he was sitting on a piano, a most singular seat to select, it appears to me, and, all at once, he and the piano were caught up, and lodged in the air, near the ceiling, where for some time they stayed. This person is so fat, that while he was telling of this remarkable spiritual manifestation, a vision of him passed before me as he was hoisted up, his short arms holding on to his expansive waist, and his fat legs dangling at the mercy of some mischievous spirit. I laughed a little, and the Professor smiled too. After the piano story was done with, an uneducated man got up, and told us a story of a man and a horse; how the ghost of the man or the horse,

I could not tell which, haunted him, slapping against the wall of the room. As the man told the story, he got up, when the part came, about the ghost's fighting propensities; he struck the wall so hard that a large piece of plaster came off. While all this was going on, I observed a person who was, as I thought, intoxicated, and as I saw other persons looking towards him as if he were in an odd condition, I concluded that they intended to put him out of the room; but the man dodged about a little, and put on some airs that savored very much of nonsense, if not of brandy, and then stood up and gave us a half hour's worth of rigmarole, which, I was told by one of the audience, was a sermon by John Wesley. Only think of John Wesley's being so slandered; his spirit was not free to come and go that night, for if it were, I am sure it would have appeared in that house and denied the allegation. But, as it was, the people applauded the impostor, for he was nothing more or less; and he got out of his trance, and went into an immoderate state of conceit without any difficulty. Then the drawings of spiritual apples and pears were handed round, all done by somebody in a state of ecstasy; for it seems these spirits eat and drink and enjoy themselves, something after our fashion. Oh! it is a precious farce, though Irene will believe in it, in spite of me. But we must bid you good morning, Mrs. Johnson! present me to Web-

ster and Clay and the French gentlemen; and tell them this incessant gadding of theirs is very undignified, and they ought to have something better to do than to encourage women in their gossiping propensities; if they ask for your husband, tell them he is in better company than you are."

The Professor laughed as he bade his wife good morning, and then followed us to his carriage.

I observed that Irene took little interest in spiritualism when it was discussed lightly. She did not care to attend the circles, and it was evident the ordinary talk about spirits hardly elicited her notice. But when the Professor spoke eloquently on the connection between our earthly and spiritual nature, she would listen with rapt attention. His beautiful sentiments and choice language found a response in her, while his affectionate remembrance of his children, his deprecation of the idea of being separated from them, his eagerness to seize the hope that they might be about him, loving him still; all this roused to excitement the strong affections that had been silenced, but not destroyed, in the bosom of this desolate girl. For with all her wealth, beauty, and friends—was she not desolate, when forsaken by her father, divided by the seas from him and her only brother, and by death from a mother and sister whom she still passionately loved.

CHAPTER VIII.

FASHION AND THE GRAVE.

Cold in the dust this perished heart may lie,
But that which warmed it once shall never die.

My stay in New York was prolonged beyond my expectations, and had it not been for the interest that I took in Irene, beyond my wishes. I saw every reason for Mrs. Searle's anxieties, and felt most anxious that her charge should be under medical treatment. For, though she was only diseased mentally, in her person she was beginning to show the wear of a continual and ever increasing excitement. Sometimes she would be silent, weak, and deadly pale; often, the color in her cheek became a stain, it was so deep; added to this, the unnatural brightness of her eyes, gave her an alarming appearance. Those eyes, at times so dark and lustrous, were often heavy, and swollen from weeping, while beneath them lay deep shadows, such as are occasioned by long illness.

One day, we were going to Greenwood, to visit, at Irene's urgent request, Mrs. Hamilton's grave. It was one of those bright spring days that are common in New York, when the ground is cold and damp, while overhead the sun is shining between the light and flying clouds. It was in May, and the foliage was bursting forth in new beauty. We endeavored to dissuade Irene from going to the cemetery, but she was bent on it, and was very much irritated when we proposed to pass the morning in another way. She had looked ill and flushed since waking at an early hour, and had eaten no breakfast. Without seeming to observe her, I did so closely, and, to my great sorrow, saw that she was more unwell than she had been at any time during my acquaintance with her. She walked about the room, frequently throwing herself on the sofa, and putting her hand to her head. She would not answer when we asked her if she were suffering, but we knew she was in pain. Placing my hand on her forehead, I found it very warm, so I asked her not to go out that day, but to allow Mrs. Searle to call in a physician. She refused in the most positive manner, and with the most rapid movements made her preparations to go out. Mrs. Searle soothed her by promising not to call in medical aid, and we hurried to be ready to go with her. The Professor was waiting for us at the door, and I saw him

start as he looked at Irene. Without making any observation on her appearance, he followed her to the carriage, and took his seat by her; she threw herself back, and with closed eyes, remained silent during our ride through the noisy streets of the city. When we came to a part where conversation was possible, she abruptly asked the Professor some question connected with her favorite subject; he answered her carelessly, wishing to turn her thoughts to something else. This was impossible; there was but one theme that engaged her thoughts; all the treasures of her richly stored mind were sealed; reason no longer controlled imagination. I looked at her, and a pang smote across my heart as if I had seen her falling from some dizzy height.

Mrs. Searle, pale and abstracted, turned from her; she was convinced; there was no mistaking the fatal illumination of the eye and cheek.

The Professor spoke gently to her; he loved her, and he could no longer conceal from himself the danger she was in.

Most beautiful she looked; her bonnet strings she had untied, and the bonnet, slipping back, displayed her fine hair, so tastefully arranged. The small blue veins could be traced in the dazzling white of her temples.

"Why won't you talk to me?" she said to the Professor.

"I will, but not of spiritualism—"

"And why?" she interrupted him, looking with great earnestness in his face.

"Because it is not good for you," he said; "you are not well, and this subject excites you. Why are you so unwilling to do what your best friends wish? We love you, and would do anything for you. Until lately, you were so good and obedient; now you are wilful. Wait until you get well, and then we will talk all this over again. We are both mistaken, I fear, Irene, in hoping to have intercourse with our dear ones who have been withdrawn from us. Let us assist each other to be patient; you are as dear to me as my children were; you are, to me, in their place; let me be, to you, a dear friend, and soon, some other love will come to chase away the untimely gloom that has settled in your young heart; forget the past, or let it serve to prepare you for the stern duties of life; you are not always to be sad. I will tell you two lines that must have been written for you—

> Who sows in tears, his spring time years
> Shall bind the golden sheaves."

"Talk to me," she said, "of death, and of the soul; there are no golden sheaves for me, there are only tears. Answer me, why do I take so much delight in spiritualism?"

"It is not to be questioned," said the Professor, "that the very mystery attached to our future and spiritual life, is a great charm. The ignorant and vulgar content themselves, in their superstitious yearnings, with absurd stories of ghosts and graveyards; they hear, or fancy they hear, strange noises, long-drawn sighs, and unearthly groans. The cultivated mind, when of a peculiar temperament, requires more; it has higher impulses with the same tendency; it turns to the poetic and contemplative. Death, eternity, immortality, are the subjects of its musings, but it is continually straitened. It knows there is a future.

> My own dim life can teach me this,
> That life shall live for evermore;
> Else earth is darkness at the core,
> And dust and ashes all that is.

Yet the soul is not satisfied to know that it is immortal. *How* shall it be with me, it asks, when shaking from my wings the heavy mists of earth that have gathered there, I shall spring upwards? There is only silence; we may not know. Irene! let us forget it; there is only disappointment."

"What then, must we do?" said Irene mournfully.

"Submit," said the Professor, "and turn to learning, science, the arts, for consolation."

"*You* may do that," said Irene, "but these things would not satisfy me."

"Is there no consolation in religion, Irene?" I said.

"It bids me wait," she said petulantly; then turning to the Professor, "Why have you changed? you told me that you believed that while here, we might hold communion with spirits."

"I said it *might* be so, Irene!" said the Professor; "you reason, like a woman, from the heart; you desire it, and you say it is so."

"It is lamentable," I said, "that woman is not fitted by her education, to reason calmly; to be independent of her affections; in so many cases, her feelings rather than her judgment, guide her. She is educated to be led and not to go alone, when so often she has no one to guide her, but herself. Woman is not truly woman, if she be not able to work out, of herself, some work of God, alone and unaided."

"You take from woman, then," said the Professor, smiling, "her most enticing characteristic; leave to man the roughness and sturdiness of the oak; let woman be the vine."

"She is too often the vine," I replied; "what if lightning blast the oak?"

"The vine dies with it."

"That will do for poetry," I said, "but not for life; but, as regards spiritualism, you may be the oak and

Irene the vine; she may cling to you as closely as possible, for you will brave the storm and stand forth unhurt. You will never be a spiritualist, Professor! give it up, and Irene will do so too."

"The morning air has done you good, Irene!" said Mrs. Searle; "you look so much better than before we came out."

It was so; her manner and appearance were much changed, and this was more apparent as we left the heights of Brooklyn, following the road to Greenwood. Her face was almost joyous, and the animation that pervaded her looks and words seemed natural. We rode slowly, for the day was lovely, and the scenes, before our eyes, most inviting. We were leaving the palaces of the living, and were on our way to the city of the dead. For this, there was a greater solemnity in the thought of the sea whose tide was ebbing before us; a deeper verdure on the hills, and a richer tone in the voices of nature to which we were listening. Most musical of all was the voice of the young spiritualist; she spoke rapturously of the state of the departed, when she addressed me; "I remember to have heard my mother say, that as a young person, your aspirations were devotional, and that she had heard this spirit had stood the test of the actual in life; you talk to me of the Bible; do we not learn there that spirits came to visit man on earth?"

"Yes, certainly," I said, "when sent by God to accomplish a great purpose."

"They come to all *with a purpose*," said Irene; "to me they are messengers of consolation; their visits take away all the horror of the grave. I go to visit my mother now; but, can she speak to me through the marble sepulchre? Can she put forth her hand, bursting apart the earthy chain that binds her down, to welcome me? Can she wipe away my tears? But she comes to me in the unseen form *with a purpose*. If my head is aching—it aches so often—she passes her dear hand over my brow, and it pains no more. When my temples burn with fever, and my hands—she stoops and fans them with her pure breath; they are cooled, and cease their throbbing. If the pain is here—here"—pressing her hands tightly over her heart, "she speaks to me with the old voice: 'Irene, beloved child, we are not separated; I am ever with you.'"

"Irene, my darling!" said Mrs. Searle, "don't talk so, for heaven's sake. You are tired, I know. Let us go home, and come here another time when you are well."

"I am well, dear Mrs. Searle; and you know it does me good to come here. Why do you always want to prevent me? Oh! how I wish I were lying here myself. Do not put me by my grandfather; remember *that*, Mrs. Searle! put little Margaret

there, for she never knew about it. Oh! *you* do not know about it, either. Lay me at my mother's feet; my father has left for himself the other place by her side."

She spoke so vehemently, with a burning flush on her face, and such a nervous trembling of her frame, that we were all alarmed. Mrs. Searle burst into tears, and I could hardly keep back mine; quiet as the Professor was, I saw that he was much distressed.

"Dear Irene," said he, "there are times when we cannot bear to look down into the grave. Let us leave this melancholy place; it looks lonely because we all feel sad."

"Lonely!" said Irene; "how can you call it so! why, there are sleeping here, tranquilly, fifty thousand! What a silent multitude! would you not like to see them rouse and stand up in their death robes? but they will not wake up. Ah! the far off murmur of the city does not come to them. And yet, how faint is the outline between the living and the dead; I thought *they* had no wants, but here are shops for them too; this whole street is a market where their supplies can be purchased. Now, we are passing a marble yard; here are monuments and tombstones to be had for money; and as we go along, see the places that furnish trees; evergreens, and the weeping willow, and the melancholy cypress.

In this pretty cottage we may buy bouquets and present them to the dead, laying them on their graves; and all for money. Oh! I do not like it," she continued, shuddering, "it is all money, money; the grave is desecrated for money. I want no monument over me, and bring no flowers."

We were now quite near the gate, to which I called her attention, asking her what she thought of the architecture of the two splendid monuments that were so conspicuous, being close to the entrance.

"How thin may be the cloud," she spoke as if she had not heard me, "that hangs between us and heaven. These that are lying here—they are not dead; there is no death; and that cloud, dark as it may seem to us, may be seen through by them. And yet, at times"—she drew closer to the Professor—"it seems awful to have the eyes of the dead watching us; yet I am not frightened. Oh, I love to feel in the silence of the night that my mother and sister are with me."

"It is not so," I said. "Irene, you have no warrant for believing this, and it is not right to believe it; you have a better consolation, for you may be assured your friends are with God. You may go to them, but they will not return to you; lean on your Saviour, and not on these fancies that are born of a diseased imagination. Your mother often talked to you of Christ, of all that he did, of

all that he suffered for you. *She* believed in him; do not you?"

"I suppose so," said Irene, "but my father does not. Sometimes, but not often, they talked of such things, and my father would tell her to believe what she chose, but not to annoy him with such notions, and then she would weep. He could not bear to see her so, and he would speak to her very kindly, and say, 'Let me go my own way; each one must judge for himself.'"

"But, Irene!" I said, "you believe the Bible."

"Oh, yes; I think I do; my mother did; I used to love to read it, but now I get confused. Mrs. Searle said I read it too much; don't talk about it, my head aches. Let us get out and walk," she continued, opening the carriage door that fastened inside; "my mother's grave is not far from here."

She jumped out, and Mrs. Searle followed her, saying, as I had not seen the grounds I had better ride about, and the Professor would go with me.

"What do you think of Irene?" said the Professor to me.

"I think she is losing her mind; she is now perfectly insane on the subject of spirits."

"I am afraid you are right, but what must be done? I have never seen her so agitated as she is this morning."

"Mrs. Searle's indulgence is very unfortunate,"

I replied. "Irene should not be here now, and yet I do not know how one can prevent it."

"It is this that alarms me in Irene," said the Professor; "she has become so wilful; she is not so naturally; if it continue, there will be a necessity of some closer restraint; but, good heavens! can it be that the very medicine that is offered her, has proved a poison! Upon what may the soul lean when these afflictions multiply themselves? Madam, I would rather see her dead than insane!"

"We may not choose between the trials that God sends to teach us where the soul may find repose. *You* have confounded spiritualism and religion; they are two different things."

"We are approaching Mrs. Hamilton's grave," said the Professor; "poor Irene, how statue-like she stands among her dead. Observe how her cheeks are flushed; surely she is growing much worse; we must be more cautious for the future; she is not in a condition to be excited. God forbid her fine mind should become a ruin; nothing would be so sad as that."

"Death," I said, "is a thousand times preferable, unless the reason may be restored; it is proved now beyond all doubt, that diseases of the mind are manageable like others in most cases, when the friends are willing to take the proper means for recovery."

CHAPTER IX.

THE AFTER-LIFE.

Ah! whither strays the immortal mind!

"THE driver," said the Professor, "has turned, so that we may see these new monuments. How these grounds are filling up; where do all these live, what *are* their occupations? The capacities of the soul must be ever expanding—I would know of these things; may it not be the part of spiritualism to reveal them? It is not unreasonable to suppose there is a way by which our spirits may communicate with those who have thrown off the earthly form."

I answered him: "There is nothing in Scripture to encourage us to hope this; God summons the soul to himself, and having judged it as he has forewarned us in the Bible, he condemns it to eternal misery, or advances it to never ending joy."

"Where then is his goodness," said the Professor, "in creating the strong ties of earth if they are to

be sundered forever after so short an intercourse? If your religion teaches this, I would not have it."

"It does not; it gives us every hope that the ties of earth will be made indissoluble in Heaven; but God is the one medium, there can be no other; at his will, alone, may parted souls commune, while, according to the views of the spiritualist, any one may irreverently summon from the abodes that God has prepared for the soul, that soul to the earth again—a theory most shocking, and opposed to common sense."

"I want something," said the Professor, earnestly, "some faith, be it what it may, that will insure to me the meeting my lost darlings again."

"The faith of Christ will insure you that. Your children, early called from earth, knew no actual sin, and such as they inherited by nature is washed out in that

> Fountain filled with blood
> Drawn from Emmanuel's veins.

They are at rest—you cannot disturb them; would you withdraw them from the protection of the Good Shepherd? but, would you see them again when your summons comes? God has revealed the way. Faith in Jesus Christ, such faith as will induce you to use your wealth, your talents, your all, to his service. But, I long to take Irene from

these grounds; will you request the driver to go towards where she and Mrs. Searle are standing?"

As we came near the Professor sighed and said, "My poor child! must I see her splendid mind crushed?"

"She has a fine intellect, a gift from God," I replied. "Religion would have brought it to the foot of the cross; it would have submitted to lay down in its shadow. But spiritualism impels the mind to a noble flight, its votaries say; it soars awhile and then falls to the dust. Dear Irene! her Bible would have been her best friend."

"But," said the Professor again, "it is so natural to be curious as to the way in which all those whose bodies are lying here exist. Look at the graves! as Irene says, *they are not dead.*"

CHAPTER X.

THE MEDIUM.

My heart is like a lonely bird
That sadly sings,
Brooding upon its nest unheard
With folded wings.

He got out of the carriage and stood by Irene; she was resting on the lowest step, leading to the iron railing, looking over into her father's lot. Two stately monuments were there, over Mrs. Hamilton and her father, and a small but beautiful one protected the grave of the little girl. A perfect taste was displayed in the arrangement of the flowers and trees; everything was costly, but chaste.

I expressed to Irene my admiration of her mother's monument, and I saw that she was so entirely wrapped up in her own reflections that she did not even know that I was speaking to her.

I touched her, and spoke again after a minute. "What are you looking at so intently, Irene? If you could see beneath that monument, you would not

behold your mother; she is not here. Look above those flitting clouds; the distance may be less than we think between earth and heaven."

"Yes, yes," she said thoughtfully; "but you asked me last night to tell you why I became a spiritualist. The history of that heart mouldering there, taught me mysteries that I did not know the human heart could inclose. There are, in the depths of our nature, secrets that man may not in life penetrate, and that the grave will never reveal. That heart so pure, so loving, ached itself away; it is at rest. My own asks, why did it suffer? tell me, for you talk of God and of God's mercy, why is it that she suffered so? and why do I stand here, neglected and unloved, by her grave? Did she sin, and have I been so guilty that the full measure of earthly sorrow is heaped upon me, and I so young? Oh! don't talk to me of God or of religion; I can only find solace in spiritualism."

I saw it would be more than useless to attempt to reason with Irene then; she was ill, in a burning fever. But oh! she had been standing on the fearful borders of unbelief; the arguments of the infidel spiritualist had loosened, if not uprooted the principles so carefully planted in her heart, by her mother. I proposed returning to the city, and the Professor, taking Irene's hand, asked her to come to the carriage. She consented, sighing deeply, per-

haps, from contending emotions; the memory of the dead, the antagonistic views of Christianity and spiritualism, and the bodily pain she was enduring, united to cause that sigh.

We all regarded her anxiously when we had turned homeward, but she did not speak again during the ride. Nothing could exceed the brilliancy of her color, and her deep, dark eyes flashed in the sunlight as she strained them, looking towards the sea; but, while we hoped to interest her in the subject we had purposely chosen for conversation, I knew that her thoughts, like those waves, were surging onwards.

When we arrived at the St. Nicholas, I proposed that we should take a little rest before our late dinner, but we found in the parlor two gentlemen, prominent spiritualists, who had called upon Mrs. Searle with no other purpose than to see and converse with Irene; who, as soon as she heard their names, knowing them by reputation, received them with evident pleasure, though she did not say much. They had come to invite her to a circle at a private house; she declined going very positively, though she gave no reason; her modest nature withdrew from the publicity offered her. The gentlemen persisted in their solicitations; they told her that they had heard from friends in Boston of her qualities, as a medium of the highest order, and

they congratulated her on being able to aid in the great work that God willed should be carried on for the comfort of his children. She bowed in answer to their polite speeches, but made no other reply. All this time Mrs. Searle was engaged in conversation with some ladies; I was in hopes she would see proper to interfere in this game that was being played. The spiritualists in Boston were tracking their victim to make the most of her; they had written to persons who were to find her out, and use her for their own purposes.

The remarkable powers of this beautiful girl, her intellectual gifts, her tender and sensitive organization, were to be pressed into the service of the greatest folly of the age; at the risk of her languishing her life away in an insane asylum.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

A malady
Preys on my heart that medicine cannot reach,
Invisible and cureless.

I LEARNED from Mrs. Searle, that Irene had, for a year, devoted herself to the study of spiritualism; that some acquaintances in Boston had seen that she was supplied with books on the subject, and that among these acquaintances were acknowledged infidels.

They had pronounced Irene a medium, from the first; and her consciousness of possessing certain powers had come unsought; and she was opposed to acting as a medium, as it made her ill, besides that she disliked being brought into such public notice. She was sometimes suddenly thrown into a highly nervous condition, in which she wrote messages to the dead; and Mrs. Searle assured me, that if I once saw her so, I would be convinced there was no deceit about her; the first time that she had

been so influenced was after returning from a circle, to which Mrs. Searle took her, for amusement.

I was anxious to find out to what degree Mrs. Searle had encouraged Irene's interest in this subject, so I said, "Tell me what *you* think of spiritualism, as it is recognized in our country, in New England and in New York, principally."

"I think it," said she, "an imposition, an outrage, a dreadful veil that God permits Satan to hold before the mind. I know a few sincere spiritualists; they are fools, men and women, though I confess to a very strong expression; I know many who call themselves so, for fashion's sake, who are always running after something new—Mrs. Johnson, for instance; and I know those who wilfully deceive, like Mr. Walker. The victims of table moving and spiritual knocking, are crowding into our insane asylums and into our cemeteries. Oh! I am indignant at the thought of it, when I think of Irene."

"But your friend, the Professor, is half a spiritualist; you certainly think highly of him, not only as a friend, but intellectually."

"Yes, indeed; but the Professor will never be a spiritualist; he was *almost persuaded* after the death of his little girls, but he has too much sense; he always considered many of their tenets impossible. What attracts him is the poetry of spiritualism; it is a flower that he holds in his hand, placidly con-

templating it as he does the lily in Irene's hair; but he will find it to fade as quickly."

"How could you let Irene so completely give herself over to these fanatics?" I said.

"We all thought she was going to die of grief, as I once told you; it was a heartbreak to see her; I thought anything that would interest her would do her good. Soon after she began to look into the subject of spiritualism, a most singular coincidence happened.

"She had heard, through a friend from New York, that Margaret, her little sister, was sick. She was dreadfully alarmed, but became quiet, in the hope of hearing it was a mistake, and she was sitting near me, absorbed in thought; all at once she started, and told me she had seen her sister, who had called her home. I was dreadfully shocked at hearing her talk so, and tried to reason with her, but she was in an agony of distress, and would not listen to me; she said she *would* go home, without waiting to hear. I sent right away for the doctor, who said she had probably been dreaming; but I told him she had not been asleep. Then, he said, I had better take her home, and finding all well there, she would attribute what had passed to her imagination. Shall I tell you what I felt when, arriving at the Grove, to see Margaret in her coffin? She was dead of scarlet fever, and she had expired on Friday evening, at five o'clock, at

the very moment when Irene had fancied she saw and heard her. From that hour, Irene has been a spiritualist; she has seen visions; she has dreamed dreams. I told her this had been a mere coincidence, and that similar occurrences were on record as having happened to others; but she is confirmed in her own views of the incident.

"Mr. Hamilton was so wrapped up in his own grief (or from some other cause), that he took very little notice of Irene. I asked him if I should take her back with me. 'Oh, yes!' he said, 'and console her if possible. She is innocent, and yet how she suffers, and you would tell me there is a God of love and mercy.'

"These were dreadful words, and I hurried to the next room, lest I should hear more. The middle door was open; Irene was there, and she had heard what her father said. I never shall forget her appearance. She went to him, and timidly took his hand; her pale lips quivered as she said to him, 'Can you not forgive? Is there no voice in your soul to plead for me?'

"'Forgive!' he said, looking much surprised; 'what do you mean? Can you know? It is impossible! Go from me, unhappy child! Have I not enough to bear but you would keep before me the memory of *that?* Would you bring back now the waking of a dream, that the heaven that women talk

about could not realize? Go; if there were a God, I would bid him bless you.'

"Irene turned from him, and pale as one of her own spirits, flitted through the apartment; I followed her, inexpressibly astonished at what I heard. I made no remark upon it to Irene, but persuaded her to go back to Boston the next day. We did not see Mr. Hamilton again; but he wrote me a note, commending Irene to my care, but said he was not equal to taking leave of us.

"Thus, we turned once more from the house of mourning. Irene embraced again and again her little brother, weeping most bitterly. She lifted her eyes to her father's chamber; the blinds were closed —all was silent there. Oh, my friend, even to a worldly woman, such as I am, there is something too awful in man closing the door of his heart, barring it up against God!"

CHAPTER XII.

A SCIENTIFIC COTERIE.

"It is in vain that you wander scientifically about; no man will learn more than he can."

"Then see that you conceive profoundly what is not made for human brains."

"I should wish to be profoundly learned, and should like to comprehend what is upon earth or in heaven, science and nature."

"Excuse me, it is a great pleasure to transport one's self into the spirit of the times, to see how a wise man has thought before us, and to what a glorious height we have at last carried it."

I WENT with the Professor to a scientific coterie. It was one of the most remarkable incidents of my life, too interesting to confide to the charge of memory alone. Penetrated with the sublimest emotions, while under their influence, I recorded the scene of that evening, that at some future period, when oppressed with the actual, I might look back to this as a monument to the spiritual.

On that occasion, I felt that

> "The thirst that from the soul doth rise
> Requires a drink divine."

I quaffed a full, foaming cup of the nectar that Science offers to her followers. Nor shall I here consider the point, whether Science is false as well as fair; I am not competent to judge, for I have only worshipped her afar off. I have beheld her enveloped in misty clouds, and have thought, were that courteous but dull lady, Reason, to ascend to the summit of Chimborazo, and resting on tiptoe, breathe a long breath upon those clouds, they would be dissolved, their priestess vanishing among their parting vapors. But having stood in the enchanted halls of the Academy of Science, I am affrighted at the daring nature of my speculations. Be quiet, aspiring heart! Shall a woman's step be heard where man with firm and echoing tread may pass undaunted? I submit to the decree of nature, and will only look up to those hills, on whose highest peak, in the full blaze of immortal light, the members of the Academy of Science stand.

Yet I confess it is difficult for me to subdue the impetuous impulses of my nature towards those dazzling heights; but I intend to confine myself to facts.

The disciples of Science held their meetings at a

late hour in the evening, and before going, Mrs. Searle suggested that the Professor and I should fortify ourselves for what might be in store for us by some supper. I ate a piece of bread and butter, and a delicious morsel of the tongue of a buffalo, that noble animal, that, constantly forced from his strongholds, seeks a refuge in the shades of the Rocky Mountains; but even there he is pursued, and from thence came the mouthful to which I have just referred. And here let me draw a parallel. The lovely features of Science may not be hidden from the gaze of man. She may fly to the fastnesses of the cavern and the lofty hill, throwing over her face a veil that she deems impenetrable. The farther she retreats, the more ardent the pursuit of her lovers. Her voice, raised in deprecation, allures by its sweetness, and though no one of her worshippers has ever yet pressed her to his heart, and borne her off as his own, yet many a trophy has been secured that will testify to her charms.

One has severed from their luxuriant clusters golden curls; another has touched her cheek, and borne away the faintest portion of its blush; another with pride displays a glance of her eye that has rested in his own; and another still has boasted that when he knelt before her, she stayed for one moment her airy flight, and bending over him, pressed upon his forehead her ruby lips. All this was recalled

to my mind by the thought of the indefatigable hunter, and the choice morsel of his victim. And, it may be, that even in his death the buffalo is a type.

There are enthusiasts who declare the day is approaching when science may no longer elude the advances of mortals; that from very weariness she will stay before them. Resting on some now inaccessible height, she will recline in helplessness before her pursuers. Closing her dreamy eyes, the glow will pale in her cheek, the lustre fade on her brow, and her graceful limbs will compose themselves in the decency of death. While, awe-struck, those to whom she has been so dear gaze upon her, she will disappear, her life exhaling itself in one sigh. Then, adds the voice of prophecy, will sages and philosophers turn to each confounded, and descending to earth, doubt the existence of the object of their idolatry.

The hall honored by the presence of the members of the Academy of Science deserves a passing notice. It was large, and simply furnished; on the floor was a brick-red carpet; on the mantlepiece were two statuettes, representing whom I know not. I observed, in frames, likenesses of two men in wigs; whether they represented the scientific race in general, or whether they were intended to transmit to posterity the fame of some particular scholars, I

cannot say. Doubtless they were there for a good purpose.

In the centre of the hall was a long mahogany table, on which were strewed papers of a mysterious appearance. Around the table were seated the Initiated.

How shall I describe them? So august their deportment; so dignified their attitudes; so imposing their every look.

The presiding officer was a bland, spectacled old gentleman, with a majestic appearance, and on his right and on his left were the philosophers whose researches were to gather around them such a splendor of dazzling light as would blind an enraptured world. *Under* the table sat one of the fraternity, for I am convinced that, encased in the form of that little black dog, was the transmigrated soul of Sir Isaac Newton!

I suggested this in a whisper to the Professor, who reproved me for trifling in such a presence.

The audience that night was vastly select, being composed of four or five ladies and twice as many gentlemen. One of the ladies, a young girl, was quite good looking, while three of the gentlemen were remarkably handsome.

All the formalities having been performed, Professor Tonson arose, and unfolding some foolscap, commenced to read. Owing to the obtuseness of

my intellect, I could not discover the subject of his disquisition; it was, no doubt, some profoundly unintelligible theme intensely mystified. Being assured that it was as far beyond my comprehension as are the soarings of the eagle above the flights of a domestic hen, I permitted my imagination to go gadding. It brought me home thoughts (suggested by the Professor's handsome French eyes) of la belle France, its ancient chateaux and modern fashions; of the terrible Mazarin and the pretty Empress Eugénie; of Louis Quatorze and beautiful, erring, and unfortunate La Vallière; of the two Buonapartes, and of a nice French maid, who used to comb my hair so gently. All these French notions came to me, while the Professor was eloquently discussing the fact that animals and vegetables were the same thing. By this time some of the audience were wrapped in sleep; but the Professor went on, and concluded by observing that cod-liver oil, taken internally and used externally, would forever preserve the human system in health, when, lo! at the announcement, Sir Isaac burst from his retirement under the table, and rushing madly to the door, uttered a philosophic bark, that was echoed by another of the canine race, as it appeared to us; but I am confident it was Galileo in dog's disguise. "We have died, and shall the philosophers of the nineteenth century pretend to have discovered a lease of

life?" Such, I am persuaded, was the meaning of their chorus of barks, which (with shame I record it) excited to the highest degree the risible faculties of the audience. But the more ridiculous the scene, the more solemn the demeanor of the members of the Academy of Science. They must have been shocked at the want of self-possession displayed by Sir Isaac, who, when on earth before, was considered a very genteel and good-natured person, and behaved in a most gentlemanly manner to a little dog named Diamond, whose fame has descended with his master's to an admiring posterity.

("If I could but hear no more about posterity! Suppose I choose to talk about posterity, who then would make fun for contemporaries? *That* they will have, and ought to have. Let fancy, with all her choruses, reason, understanding, feeling, passion, but mark me well, not without folly, be heard.")

Folly!—but, Professor Tonson concluded his address, and the presiding officer looked most kindly towards him; the expression of his countenance said, "You have done nobly; I have not the slightest idea of what you have been talking, nor is it to be expected that you understand your subject; it is the part of science to mystify."

Then arose Professor Blank, and with him the expectations of the audience; for he was to explain many interesting points in the history and prospects

of the moon. But no sooner had he commenced, than my ne'er-do-well imagination went gossiping. *Was* the moon made out of green cheese? Could tunnels be cut through the mountains for railroad purposes? What strange influence has the moon on lovers, that all their troubles and peccadilloes are charged to her? Was the moon inconstant? was she chaste? Was Mother Goose to be relied on in her statement about the old lady, that, on a broom-stick, ascended seven times higher than the moon? Were poets really moonstruck? Did fairies come out of their hiding-places when the moon arose? And, oh! oh! were *my* moonlight days over forever? Such a pang as arrested my meditations when the last thought occurred to me!

I looked at my right-hand neighbor; he slept and murmured "Soporifics!" I turned to the Professor; he was wrapped in contemplation; I regarded the speaker, marking his intelligent countenance and expressive smile; listening to his nicely turned sentences, admiring the enthusiasm that animated him.

What does he mean? I asked myself, as he figured away on a tremendous blackboard. What *does* he mean? "Curious fool, be still!" a voice from within me uttered. "If philosophy have stolen his affections and borne them off to the solar

system, is it for you to ask the reason? Is human love the growth of human will?"

Professor Blank bowed, and took his seat; the president of the academy rewarded him with one of his sweetest smiles. His look was not such as rests on the countenance of Jove, when "he shakes his ambrosial curls and gives the nod;" no, it said, "Good boy, good boy! bon bons! bon bons!"

Another disciple of science addressed the chair (in whose shadow Sir Isaac, having recovered his composure, was meekly seated).

And again, let me announce my extreme regret in the utter impossibility of my finding out the subject of his paper.

In the first place, he observed, he had nothing to say. In the second, he had had no time to prepare this nothing for so intelligent an audience; and he added, that all he had to say must be said at this time, as he could not be present at the next meeting of this honorable body. He talked a little of barometers, and of the Pacific Railroad. He skipped about from the tops of glaciers to smiling valleys, with the agility of a chamois. Sometimes, he seemed to forget where he was, and there was reason to fear that he would fall into some of the awful chasms, or over the frightful precipices of which he was talking, but like a thoughtful house cat, he always came down on his feet, and when he closed his ad-

dress, though much exhausted, he was as well as could be expected.

At this point of the proceedings I felt obliged to ask the Professor to accompany me home, for I was mystified, bewildered, intoxicated with the deep draughts of the drink divine with which I had been regaled. I was in a state resembling ecstasy. The Professor said I talked more like a victim of Champagne, than the sedate matron that I was. When I got to the hotel, Mrs. Searle pronounced me feverish, and I went to bed, but it was near morning before my excited nerves could be composed to sleep.

In my dreams, I saw again the members of the Academy of Science. They were on an elevated platform, kneeling at the feet of their goddess Science, who presented her lovely face and form as emerging from the clouds. Sir Isaac, with a sneering aspect, was also there. I longed to ascend the platform and kneel down with the worshippers, but an unseen hand drew me back. I turned and beheld an old-fashioned lady, middle aged, and dressed in a dove-colored garment. She wore a mob cap and spectacles, and she addressed me, soberly, to this effect:—

"My name is Reason, and I warn you, for the future, not to attend the meetings of the Academy of Science. Science is a coquette, and has often

been lightly spoken of, and those that are kneeling there at her feet are 'unmitigated humbugs.'"

When I awoke it was eight o'clock; I seriously thought of another nap, but I remembered I had an engagement for the morning. "O! Science!" I exclaimed, still clinging to my pillow, "gently place thy rosy-tipped fingers under my poor head, and rouse me to the dull realities of life!" Hardly had I uttered this appeal when the door opened, and the odor of coffee and sausages entered the room. I was invigorated, and hastened to immerse my forehead in a basin of cold water. And, while putting on my morning dress, I smiled more than once at the piquant manner in which Dame Reason, in my dream, sneered at her rival, pronouncing her admirers—unmitigated humbugs.

I hurried to the breakfast table, where was Irene waiting for me. Near her was a gentleman eating a great deal of beefsteak, and talking learnedly of spiritualism. He said it was a *science*, to the knowledge of which we would soon attain.

Science again! I said to myself, turning towards Irene, who was thoughtfully regarding him. Is spiritualism indeed a science? Oh, would that Reason would come to the aid of the loveliest of its victims.

CHAPTER XIII.

A "CIRCLE."

"Like the lily
That once was mistress of the field and flourished,
I'll hang my head, and perish."

IRENE, persuaded by her spiritualist friends, consented to act as a medium at a select party. Mrs. Searle determined to go with her, finding it useless to attempt any interference. I gladly accepted the invitation that was extended to me, chiefly for the interest that I felt in Irene, but my curiosity was greatly excited too. The "circle" met at the house of a gentleman well known among men of science, and when we arrived we found the rooms quite full. Many of those assembled were willing to carry to the awful future the follies of the present. They talked of the eternal world as we do of a theatre or a ball-room. Their knockings and table moving, and trickery of other kinds—I did not attempt to account for any of it, and gave the performers all credit for their skill. The evening was tiresome,

and in hopes Irene would not be called upon, or that she had refused to keep her promise, I walked round the rooms in search of Mrs. Searle. I was sorry that I had come to such a place, until I observed Irene, sitting apart, conversing with a spiritualist, with whom she had been intimate from the time of her coming to Mrs. Searle's house. "Look there," said Mrs. Searle, who had pushed her way through the crowd, to me, "that arch-fiend, Mr. Walker, has been mesmerizing Irene, in spite of all that I told him. Do you see the expression of her countenance, so dull and heavy? But he does not mean her to go to sleep just now. Oh! I wish she had not come here. Better that she should be in the Insane Asylum at once than in the power of such people."

I did not wait to congratulate Mrs. Searle on the justice of her conclusion, for I noticed many were gathering around Irene, and a gentleman was placing a table before her.

"No! no!" she said; "I cannot write! it makes me ill—I will not!"

"Irene!" said the person that Mrs. Searle had called the arch-fiend, and that, I afterwards learned, was an avowed infidel. He spoke in a tone of command, but with a tenderness in his voice. Irene looked towards him for an instant, with eyes filled with tears. Then she laid her arm on the table, and,

bending her form slightly, looked down, as in deep thought. There was perfect silence in the room; every eye was fixed on her. I thought of the priestess and the oracle, and well might many of the company be compared to heathen worshippers, awaiting a message from their god.

The varying flush that lived in Irene's cheek was settling to a crimson stain; every moment it was dyeing deeper and deeper. Great, heavy tears were falling on her white arms; I almost fancied I could hear them. A nervous trembling agitated her frame, and the table shook, slightly at first, but more and more as her excitement increased.

How they stared at her! there were the divine, and the physician, the poet and the scholar, mothers, and sons and daughters—all curious to see what she would do next. Gazing, they were, on the saddest of spectacles; a fair human temple, tottering with the storm.

Oh! it is cruel to keep her there. Hardly more so were the rites of the Aztec priest, as he tore from his victims the bleeding heart; hardly more fearful were those mysteries. For here, the sacrifice, holy by her helplessness, is more lovely than any slain on the altars of Cholula. This fair girl! what a calamity is hovering about her! Is there no help? Will no one drive away the infidel with his gray

hairs? "Surely, gray hairs and irreligion make a monstrous union."

She trembles—greater, with every moment that flies, becomes her agitation. Deeper still, the crimson dye of her cheek. Heavier, the great tears that fall upon her bosom. She looks appealingly, poor child! up to the hard face of the mesmerizer. Oh! that he would permit her to sleep. It were a relief to see those wild glances covered by the white eyelids. The folds of her black dress are disturbed by the action of her heart, and by the rise and fall of her heaving bosom. She sighs, oppressed, and murmurs incoherent words. Alas! alas! what is this that is so affecting her!

The people press forward, and close about her. They hope to catch her whispered words, and watch intently, the increasing trembling of her arm. Now it is thrown against the table with cruel force.

The mesmerizer calls the physician, and motions him to take her hand. He holds it within his, attempts to feel the pulse, and whispers, that you might crush those little fingers, but, without breaking, you could not bend them. What is it? this strange frenzy! How she suffers! She cannot speak. Her lips are paralyzed. Still her arm strikes the table. Could we smile here, it would be at the rudeness of those spirits that so cruelly belabor a lovely woman.

Now, the mesmerizer is calling on two or three to steady the table; he has put some writing paper on it, and holding Irene's arm, is forcing a pencil between her fingers. The hand dashes from right to left; the pencil, guided by an unseen influence, tears the paper, making illegible characters.

Sheet after sheet of paper is thus destroyed. Would that the spirits would become calm! Strange writing it is that is dashed off, and Irene herself could not translate it. Her face is turned away, and her left hand is pressing tightly to her forehead.

We know there are no spirits here. But Irene! can she be deceiving us? We stoop forward, looking into her eyes. We hear her panting breath, and touch, most gently, her burning brow. Stay—they are reading what she has written; short sentences, *axioms* of the infidel, axioms that never can be axioms. Again, we scrutinize her face. Can she so deceive? We try to bend her rigid fingers—we turn away, with tears, from the agony of her face.

The Professor's wife is charmed. She loves the marvellous; Irene's sufferings are nothing; *she* is amused.

The Professor has lost nothing of the scene; his brows are knit in deepest thought. Every sympathy of his kind heart is aroused for Irene.

I whisper to him, "What do you think of this?"

He replies, in a voice full of emotion, "Some blighting disease is consuming our precious one. Let us away with her from this gaping crowd." He pushes to the right and to the left, and makes room for himself to pass to her.

I look for Mrs. Searle. She is not far, leaning against the marble mantle weeping. Ay, weep! woman of the world! weep, repentant. Look at your adopted one! You promised her mother, as you hoped for heaven, to guard from sorrow and from *evil* the motherless. How have you fulfilled your trust? *You did not mean to do her harm, for you loved her.* How did you love her? You dragged her into the follies of fashionable society to deaden the sense of her sorrows. You led her to the opera, the theatre, the ball-room, and the halls of the spiritualist. Had one of these a voice that could speak comfort to her heart? Oh! had you taken her to Calvary! upon her bowed head would have fallen *those tears of blood*, and her own would have been dried. Had you told her of Him from whose sepulchre the stone was rolled away, she would have been consoled, and said "*They* are not here; they are risen."

Weep on! that with God's gifts so freely showered upon yourself, you have never given in return, all that He asks—the homage of the heart.

The color is fading in Irene's cheek; her veins are not so prominent in the snowy temples. The fingers

are relaxing their rigidity, and the arm only moves in convulsive twitchings. No longer the heaving of the bosom; one, another sigh, and it is quiet. The hand is removed from the face and droops by her side. The trance—the ecstasy—the spiritual dream is over. Call it what you will!

The reaction approaches—weakness overpowers.

On Irene the Professor's eyes are bent. Sympathy and love are, to him, spiritual vision. He looks into her soul. The strongest pity nerves him. What! is she to be murdered through her own sensibilities? He will not see it done.

She is fainting in her weakness. He draws her to his bosom, thus supporting her drooping head. Over his arm hangs the sweeping length of hair, from which the supporting comb has fallen. The lilies are gone too—they are lying at his feet. Oh! to see a woman in the long night of sorrow, without a star to comfort and to guide! To see a wreck of genius and love and affections, stronger than life.

She is reviving—a slight tinge is perceptible in her cheek. She is conscious; and looks up to see a hundred eyes fixed curiously upon her. She cannot bear it, but tries to rise that she may go away. Take her home, for the love of God! Soothe her with sweet offices to sleep, that her mind be not gone. Reason will brighten again, flickering like the taper over

the face of the dead, ere it goes out to a dreadful darkness.

She is disrobed, and has laid down at our bidding. She is docile and childlike, so tired out. I bend over to kiss her now pale face. She thanks me for *loving her.*

She has turned her face from me—and sleeps.

I kneel beside her. "O God! let no infidel whisper disturb the calmness of her repose. Send thy angels to minister to her. Let them bring sweet memories of her childhood; pure dreams of her infant days when she clasped her hands and answered, "Lord! here am I."

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CHAPTER XIV.

IRENE AND HER HARP.

"The bird retains his silver note
Though bondage chains his wing!
His song is not a happy one,
I'm saddest when I sing."

THE morning that followed this exciting scene that I have failed to describe, and to do so justly would be impossible, found Irene pale, quiet, and suffering from headache. It was raining so hard that we could not think of looking out of doors for amusement. At this time I was in constant association with Mrs. Searle and with her adopted daughter; my husband had gone farther North, and, at Mrs. Searle's urgent solicitation, I consented to remain in New York until his return.

At about noon, Mrs. Searle, against Irene's wishes, sent for a physician, who prescribed perfect repose, and his advice happened to correspond with Irene's wishes; she was not inclined to converse, and when we spoke to her, answered us by a word, or not at

all. Mrs. Searle, convinced at last of the propriety of informing Mr. Hamilton of the alarming condition of his daughter, wrote him fully on the subject, and left him to decide what it was proper to do. In the mean time, until she could hear from him, she consented to gratify me, by going home with us, where Irene would hear spiritualism mentioned only in condemnation. I tried to induce Irene to look for pleasure in a visit to the South, and assured her that my daughter, who was her own age, would regard her as a sister; but though she offered no objections to our plans, she took no interest in them, and the hope that I might influence her and be of service to her, was dying away.

Towards the close of the day, she was evidently brighter, and, at my suggestion, got up and dressed for the evening that we were to pass quietly in Mrs. Searle's private parlor. Several friends assembled there, and the Professor came, as usual; he had been deserted by his wife, who had gone to pass a sociable evening with the ghost of Napoleon Bonaparte. The Professor looked grave, though he was most affectionate in his manner to Irene, who was much attached to him. I sighed, as I thought the time might be gone forever, when his influence over her could be for her good. Irene, languid and perfectly quiet, sat on a small sofa, and by her the Professor established himself; at first, he tried to draw her

into conversation, but soon perceiving that she was annoyed by his attention, he let her alone. Irene's harp, that Mrs. Searle had sent from Boston to the St. Nicholas, stood in the corner; it had been untouched since it came. I had the greatest wish to hear Irene play, for I had heard much of her genius for music. Towards the close of the evening I went to her, and proposed that she should gratify me; she refused at first, but seeing me very anxious, she crossed the room to where the harp was standing. Before this, she had seemed almost angry when any one asked her to play. Now, she stood for a moment by the instrument, then passed her fingers over the untuned strings.

She was dressed in white, and the lily of the valley drooped, as usual, in her hair. I told her once that she had been reading the Blithedale romance, and, like Zenobia, she had chosen and always wore her emblem; but she said, that from a child she had always dressed her hair with lilies, her mother used to gather and put them there. I was affected by the simplicity with which she accounted for her fondness for this simple ornament.

She stood tuning the harp, and looking most lovely as she touched string after string, bringing, by the touch, harmony from discord. Sweeter and more perfect became the chords, until she swept over them a skilful hand, now and again detecting a

slight imperfection of sound that could not escape her ear.

"Irene," said the Professor to me, "is most beautiful when tuning her harp. She is the very impersonation of harmony, the throned queen of music. Standing there, across this great room, looks she not like a siren from under the sea? with those flowing robes white like its foam. If she live and recover from this sickness, if sickness it may be, Irene will be the perfect woman; if she love, she will love once and forever. Yet, she will never enslave herself to lover or husband, for she has naturally an independence of mind that every woman ought to possess. The pressure of disease has enfeebled this, but I trust that her dignity of character will re-assert itself. So far, she has known no thought of Love; the love of her scattered or broken family; the love of books, of the arts, of nature, these have been all in all to her. I wish she did love some man worthy of her; it would be an anchor that would steady her affections. What a scene that was last night! how she suffered! it was a nervous excitement, bewilderment, derangement. I am ready to renounce spiritualism when I think of it. Hear that magnificent prelude!"

We listened as she performed piece after piece of the most brilliant music. She was not playing for others, but for herself, and she threw her whole soul

into the performance; she was so deeply absorbed in her occupation, that, I am sure, she was unconscious of the presence of listeners. She played the most difficult pieces for a time, and slowly changed to a strain that had a *dying fall;* then, drawing out the last sweet, sad notes, she turned away from the harp.

"Don't get up, Irene," said Mrs. Searle; "give us one song."

"Oh, yes!" said several persons, "do sing; sing one of the exquisite songs from Norma."

She looked at me. "What shall I sing?"

"Something that you like!" I answered.

"It will be very simple," she said. Then she added, striking the chords, "I arranged the air to these beautiful words."

She played part of the air as a prelude, and then sang:—

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the under world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one,
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah! sad and strange, as in dark summer dawns
The earliest hope of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes,
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
Oh, death in life, the days that are no more."

She finished, rose once more from the harp, and left the room. I bade the Professor good-night; he held my hand for a moment, slowly enunciating these lines from the author of Irene's song:—

"Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away."

CHAPTER XV.

UNREST.

"Thy words have touched a chord of memory's lyre,
And waked the key-note of the saddest dirge
That fancy ever played to melancholy."

THAT night, Mrs. Searle complained of not feeling as well as usual, and I advised her to go to bed, and, that she might be under no anxiety about Irene, I told her I would sleep with her. So, I invited Irene to come to my room, pleading my unwillingness to be alone.

Long after we had retired, Irene continued restless; but I thought it best not to notice it, hoping each moment that she would fall asleep, but as she tossed on her pillow, and did not seem to be composing herself, I asked if anything were the matter, that she could not sleep. She said she was always wakeful during the first hours of the night. She seemed inclined to converse, and I hoped that she would presently be fatigued from talking, and fall into slumber. She mentioned her mother.

"You do not know," she said, "how lying here by your side has recalled to my mind the last few nights of my mother's life. It has brought every hour back. Mrs. Searle is very good to me, and I love her; but you—it must be that you speak so often of God that I feel more at home with you, as if my mother spoke to me through you."

"Let it be so, my dearest," I said. "You are not well, and you have seen heavy affliction, but it is time now that its remembrance should be softened; you must not keep it so constantly before you; there are many happy days in store for you, if you will believe it. But, as you hope again to hold intercourse with your mother, avoid the company of those who do not believe in God; look upon an infidel with horror."

"My father is an infidel," she said, in reply.

"Pray for him, then, and try, by every means, to change his views; but, my dear child, what do *you* believe on this, to us all, momentous subject?"

"Oh! I cannot tell you, for I do not know; lately everything is confused when I think about it. Is not nature God? My father says so? Is God indeed, as others say, so awful, so unapproachable? Was Christ this God? Yes, yes! my mother assured me that. Is Heaven a place where the weary are at rest? Is there a hell? a place of torment and of burning, where their worm dieth not. O God!"

and she started from her pillow, sitting up in bed, and clasping her hands over her head. "O God! tell me how all this is!"

Shocked at her excessive agitation, I saw how unwise I had been to stir within her bosom these contending thoughts. I begged her to lie down again, and after a little while she became more quiet. "But I cannot sleep," she said. "Let me go back to the time when I loved God and the Bible; let me tell you of my childhood."

CHAPTER XVI.

RETROSPECTION.

"Care straightway builds her nest in the depths of the heart, hatches vague tortures there, rocks herself restlessly, and frightens joy and peace away."

"Full swells the deep, pure fountain of young life."

"My childhood!" Irene repeated. "Like Eve, I had none. Yet in nothing else can I say, like Eve. Had I sinned, there was no Eden to lose; no beauteous garden; no breeze born in heaven; no tree of life. It seems to me, there was ever, from the earliest dawn of my intellect, a flaming sword, turning every way, scaring me from the hope of happiness.

"In my first years, I was separated from my mother. She was returned to me, and I loved her. Oh, how sweet to be able to say, she loved me! I was her oldest child; then a brother, and a little sister so fair, that I wonder if she were other than an angel straying from her heavenly home. Not lost—permitted to wander. She has returned from whence she came.

"My father worshipped his two youngest children, but he never, in my remembrance, gave me one word, one look of affection. His lips never touched mine, nor was I ever folded to his heart. How can this be? you ask, and so I have often asked myself.

"Perhaps—the thought *would* come to me—I am not his child. Some one found me, a poor, desolate thing, and brought me to his door, and she whom I called mother persuaded him to let her take me in.

"Thus did I speculate on my own history, as I lay on my little bed at night. I longed to ask my mother if it were so; but something restrained me. In summer, I would look up to the silvery-tipped clouds, when, the shutters fastened open, the moon would shine in the broad windows. My mother thought I was sleeping, when I was listening to the wind, and watching the branches of the trees as they swung by, the shadows of the leaves playing on my bed. I loved to hear their rustling. 'What do they talk about?' I asked myself. 'Can *they* tell me why my father does not love me?' And the waves of the Hudson, that were forever dashing against the rocks near our house: I was sure *they* had a voice. What did they say? Oh! I often fell asleep, wearied out, trying to understand this great mystery. Young as I was, nature taught me the parent must love the child.

"My ideas changed with the passing years. I was

assured the sad, beautiful woman, in whose presence I was continually, was my mother. As I grew older, I saw her devotion to me; the compressing of her lips, that seemed forced to be silent, when cold words were spoken to me; the many times that, when we were alone, she folded me in her arms and wept over me. I knew she was my mother.

"No longer a child, my desire to know the mystery was more intense. Once, a thought came; had it remained, it would have destroyed me. She was surely my mother; but he, whose roof sheltered me, was not my father. Affectionate to all but me, I was nothing to him. I knew my mother's history: this was her only marriage; she was still young. Could she have loved other than her husband? Was this her great, her hopeless sorrow? And was there sin added to sorrow? Oh! could there be shame attached to her whose presence reminded you of the angels? It could not be! The moonlight, the clouds, the waving branches, the gurgling river—my own heart, answered me. She whom I so loved, who so loved me, was good. There must be a secret in her history. I knew my father's devotion to her; did she respond to his deep affection? Her life said yes. She anticipated his wishes, and her first desire was to please him.

"And I was his child. Every feature in my face is his own. My dark eyes, this mass of black hair, the

very expression of my countenance. From my mother I inherited the fairness of my complexion, the strong will, and the loving heart.

"She *left* me these, for she died. There was no sudden breaking of the golden bowl. The silver cord of life was gently loosened, as if we could see it unwind. There was no perceptible decay. She faded from us. My father's love, the caresses of the little ones, my own hopeless grief, were of no avail to detain her. She was quite calm, almost cheerful, at the prospect of passing through "those dark gates, across the wild that no man knows." During her long illness, I promoted, in every way, my father's comfort. And he rarely noticed me. Hour by hour he sat by my mother's side, with little Margaret in his arms. I have told you how he loved and indulged my brother. He only spoke to me when it was necessary, yet he was always polite. He treated me like a stranger, while to my mother I was dearer than her own life.

"Can you wonder that, as I grew older, I was often unhappy? My pride was roused; I felt wronged. What had I done to be treated thus? Every day I determined to ask my mother why it was; but every day brought a heavier grief—she was failing. The time was coming to me when I should realize the words, 'Woe to him that is alone.'

"And yet they were sweet—the hours that I passed

with my mother when we were by ourselves. Then she would talk of her early life, of *her* mother, who died when she was very young; of those who had been her friends in her southern home. Even her flowers were not forgotten. There were the pink cluster rose that climbed round and in the windows of her chamber, and the multiflora that almost covered the side of the house, and many flowers and shrubs that I had not seen in the harsher climate of the North. Of everything we talked at night, when I was resting by her side, for I was her constant nurse; she could not bear me away from her pillow.

"One night, my father sat close by her bed, holding her hand in his, while she spoke of that great change that she was so soon to experience in her own person, but that would come to all. Oh, how she entreated him to read the Bible, to become a Christian, that he might derive the consolation that only a Christian can claim in the inevitable trials of life!

"'What is death,' she said, 'to those who believe in Jesus? We must die that we may fully live. We *must* die, and I feel that death is a glorious privilege, dark as is the valley of its shadow. How truly has it been said, "The whole sum of human life is a veiling and an obscuring of the immortal spirit of man! Then, first, when the fleshly curtain falls away, may it soar upwards into a region of happier melodies." Oh, believe me! Let me speak; it is

the last time. There is a God! There is eternal life! There is eternal death! Doubt it no more, my dear husband, as you would not bind your soul to an eternity of woe!'

"'Margaret,' said my father, 'compose yourself! Why again agitate this subject? See how you have exhausted your little strength.'

"'I would spend it all, could I persuade you to believe as I do.'

"He smiled sadly. 'Can I believe against the dictates of my intellect and reason?'

"'What is intellect? what is reason,' she said, 'in the presence of God? They are His servants, and should be yours. But you make yourself their slave!'

"He did not reply again, but by bending over to kiss her forehead and her lips. Then he went to his room for the night. What would I have given for one caress, one word! I loved him then, I love him now. I possess, in the secret depths of my soul, his tender, his passionate nature. I would, at this moment, give all my hopes of this life, and all of heaven, were he here, holding my aching head to his bosom. But he has left me, and forever. Is he not cruel to slight me so, in the face of the world!

"When he was gone, I went to the bedside and threw myself in the chair in which he had been sitting. My mother drew my face down to hers and

kissed me. 'Irene! my child,' she said, 'must we be separated? Your sweet, sad face, will be before me, the last, the dearest thing in life. There is a dreary time in store for you, young and fair as you are; I dread to leave you here, to struggle with all alone; I have prayed God to let me see you happy in the affection of some heart noble as your own, but it is not to be. What will you do when I am not here to console you with my affection! Oh, God!' she said, clasping her thin hands, and raising her eyes to heaven, 'mercy, mercy, for my child! I am most guilty in thy sight, but Jesus has died. Visit not my sin upon her.' Then closing her eyes, she murmured, 'if I have sinned, I have suffered!'

"She was very pale, and I offered her a cordial that she was accustomed to take. She drank it and revived, then begged me to go to bed. I told her it was early, and I was not disposed to sleep.

"'Mother,' I said, 'will you forgive me for asking you a question? will you answer it? What did you mean, when you said in your prayer for me, 'if I have sinned, I have suffered!'

"A flush passed over her face, and left it whiter than before. 'Did I say so?' she said; 'I did not mean you to hear. Forget it, Irene. We are all most guilty in the sight of God. Oh, my daughter! so live *in your heart*, that when the time of death is near, no retrospection will arise to haunt your last

hours. I hope that my sins are washed out in the blood of the Atonement, but when I look at you, the past affrights me almost from the gate of heaven.'

"'What is it?' I said, 'that is so dreadful in the past? I know you have suffered. You are suffering now. But, mother, how have you sinned? Can you not treat me with the confidence that I feel I deserve?'

"'Don't ask me! why should you wish to know? Be satisfied when I tell you, that in the sight of man my life has been irreproachably pure, but God looks at the secret springs of action in the soul. What would you that I should tell you? You know the history of my life, or so much of it as you need know.'

"'Tell me, oh, do, mother! the history of your heart.' I could not look in her face when I asked her, so I laid my cheek against her hand; 'for all my life I have wanted to know why my father treats me with such coldness, when he loves his other children so dearly. Did I ever displease him? but I know I never could. Not to night, dearest mother, you are so tired. You must go to sleep. But to-morrow, when we are alone again. Promise me you will.'

"'I will, my darling, if you wish it. Perhaps it may be best. Read me a few verses in the Bible, and then we will try and sleep.'"

CHAPTER XVII.

MARGARET HAMILTON'S STORY.

Alas, the love of woman! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing,
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And, if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
To them, but mockeries of the past alone.

'"You ask me," said my mother, "why your father does not love you? He *does love you;* though you were but an infant when he swore, by the God *in whom he does not believe*, that he would never acknowledge you by any act of affection to be his child. I have kneeled to him to retract this sinful, this unnatural oath; but this, the greatest boon that I could ask of him, is the only one he has refused; unless I except one other, that he would love and reverence God. But, Irene, cruel as was his vow, he had provocation at the time, though not from you. I, the offender, should have suffered alone; on you has ever fallen his severest resentment. Thus it is in life. When we err, we do not suffer singly. As no

human being can live aloof from society, so the acts of each one, in a measure, affect for good or ill, those with whom that one is connected. Think of this, if ever temptation should bear against you. Women, who are beautiful, have need of every safeguard that the strictest principle can afford them. But women of intellect have a double need of precaution. Their talents give them a power over others. The very consciousness of this power may make them careless of its exercise. Genius and beauty may both be blessings to a woman, but she may turn the blessing to a curse.

"*That* will tell you, Irene, what I was, when I first saw your father." My mother pointed to a likeness of herself that hung opposite to the bed. It was a portrait the size of life, painted by Alexander, in his best days, and was a representation of youth, exquisite to see. The fairy form, the white arms, the beautiful shoulders, around which flowed drapery of gauze, that floated away as if to mingle with the clouds. I looked at the picture with an interest that I had never felt before. The lips were apart as if about to speak; the eyes radiant with happy thought; the light hair, pushed away from the temples, and falling among the folds of gauze. So calm, so holy an expression dwelt on that sweet face, that I turned to my mother and said: "You may have suffered, but you never sinned."

"Not then, not then," she said. "When that was taken, I had never thought of suffering or of sin. My mother died before I knew the value of a mother. My father allowed me every indulgence. I have often told you how carefully I was educated, and you have every advantage that I had, and more. In this, your father has not failed in his duty to you, and although he says nothing, I know he takes great pride in your proficiency. Like you, I was devoted to reading, and my father encouraged in me this fondness. He could not bear novels, and did not permit me to read them; but his library was full of good books; of essays, poetry, and history. Living at some distance from town, there were few interruptions to our quiet but pleasant life, when at home. My father was much occupied with the cares of business, his servants, and the plantation, so I was left a great deal to myself. Half my time, in summer, was spent in the arbor reading. When I was tired of my book, I would throw it aside, and *build castles in the air*, or sleep an hour away. I was a leaf, floating on the still bright waters, safe, until the winds sprung up. I did not know of what material I was made. My father, a worldly and proud man, was unacquainted with a nature like mine. One idea had been the leading one in my education —that my will was to be moulded by his, to be lost in it. He was proud of me, and impatient to intro-

duce me into society. The time was near at hand, for I had left school, not to return; yet I was still a child, as much so as when my old nurse rocked me to sleep in her arms, singing her sweet camp-meeting hymns of Moses the meek man, and of Judas who sold the Lord. Such was my twilight of happiness, ere the new, short day had dawned.

"The gentleman whose plantation was next to ours was a Mr. Murray. He had an only son, who was so anxious to be educated at West Point, that his parents had obtained an appointment for him, though they were much opposed to a military profession. Algernon Murray graduated with great credit, and then joined his regiment for a short time; after which, he obtained a leave of absence and visited Europe. Immediately on his return he came home; then, for the first time, I knew him.

"Here, Irene, begins the *history of my heart.* You have only been conscious of such affection as lives in the heart of the sister, or the child. But when that picture was painted, every passion and emotion of *my soul* had been suddenly waked up from its sleeping existence. So ignorant of the nature of such love as mine was, are you, that I allude to it with hesitation. I would do so delicately, as I would touch ivory with a rose leaf. But you must know all.

"I told you that I had read no romances. Love, the new life, breaking over my existence, was like

the gorgeous gleaming of the sunrise on the hills. Look at my face in the picture, and see it written there. It was not the mere outline of the features that the artist drew; he threw over them the joy that lightened my every step, and beamed in the brightness of my smile. When I look at that picture, I do not feel that it is myself, but some girl, who may be compared to one standing on the verge of the ocean, entranced with the sunlight glowing in the distance, hearing not the near winds, heeding not the waves that are tossing at her feet. I am ready to weep that her joyous face must lose its charm, her step become heavy as it treads its way. She may survive the gathering storm, that will leave her like a wreck on the shore.

"I loved, Irene, and why? and how? I looked into his soul, and saw, as in a mirror, the reflection of my own. Thoughts that had often sped like lightning through my brain, he spoke aloud to me as I listened. The books that I had liked most, were, to him, as household words. He loved the contemplation of nature, not selfishly, and living with her, apart from mankind, but obediently, as if she commanded him to love all, for her sake. He noticed the smallest flower that bloomed at our feet, referring it to the great Author. His mind was a treasure house; there was the learning of observation added to that of books. He would talk of the

past and of the marks with which the present recorded it. He would take me with him, through the convents, the dungeons, the desolated sepulchres; and I would weep when he told of all that mortals, like ourselves, had suffered. His favorite theme was martyrdom; he loved to talk of the martyrs of religion, of patriotism, and of love. 'Every age,' he said, 'had its martyrs; there were those, who, in our own time, for duty and for God, gave up all that earth could offer.' He told me of one who said, 'heroes were found not merely on the field of battle, but also upon the consecrated soil of virtue. The grandest of all heroic deeds are those which are performed within four walls and in domestic privacy.' Often, I wondered that there was any charm, to him, in the life of a soldier, for he could never, with his tender nature, have become hardened to the sight of blood or suffering.

"My father, with that want of foresight that we often observe in those who are striving for this world, did not see what was going on within me. At least, he did not speak of it; nor did I conceal anything from him. Oh! I did not ask myself, whence was the golden light whose radiance beckoned me to follow on. It was as natural for me to love, as for yon star to look at its image on the wave. Now, lying on my death-bed, with this faint breath growing fainter, to my own consciousness, I

look back to that time and say it was holy. Had an angel from heaven stood close by my side as I sat, with my hand in Algernon's, hearing him talk of God and of God's creatures, I should have looked for sympathy and not for reproof.

"I said that my father was a stern man, but I do not like to speak of his resentful, unforgiving disposition. It were a long story, to tell minutely, all the reasons that influenced him in his course towards me. It is sufficient to say that years before this period, the elder Mr. Murray had offended him, about a matter of business connected with their estates, and that, in a lawsuit that followed, my father was the loser. The loss was trifling, considered in point of money, but his proud nature had received a check, and though he always treated Mr. Murray with a reserved politeness, he never forgave him. When the son returned from Europe, my father was from home; he was detained away longer than he expected; on his return, he found Algernon a frequent visitor in his house. We were in the habit of riding and walking together, and of passing hours in the library, reading, or talking of books that we had read. My father permitted this to continue, nor did he ever, by word or look, make an objection to our intimacy. What was my grief and consternation, when, being informed of our engagement, he positively refused his consent. He would

not hear of it. When I entreated, he ridiculed me; when I wept, he became angry; when I threatened, he was stern and contemptuous. For I did threaten, so desperate was I at the thought of being separated forever from Algernon. The idea appalled me. I could have borne a separation of a year—a thousand years! had I been told to hope. But my father coldly forbade me to think of him. As if the affections could be constrained.

"Yes, he forbade me to think of him, called my love a childish fancy, and, irritated at my *daring to have a will*, vowed he would *bend* or *break it* to his own. He refused all conciliatory advances from the Murrays, and declared his intention of taking me from home in order to bring me to my senses. I knew I must go, but I said that I would never break my engagement, and that I felt as solemnly bound to Algernon Murray as if I were his wife. When Algernon begged him to wait awhile, and not to let his decision be a final one, in reply, he asked him, as a gentleman and a Christian, to withdraw from the engagement, for that his mind was irrevocably made up, and his persisting in it would have no other effect than to widen the breach that *he* had made between a father and his only child. Such an appeal was not lost upon a heart so full of self-respect, but so fearful of erring towards others. After a few days, Algernon wrote me a short note, in

which he said he was impelled by a sense of duty to withdraw, but that God might yet have better things in store for us. Very affectionate were his wishes for my happiness, Irene! but I crushed the paper in my hands, threw it on the floor, and stamped upon it. I felt that he treated me like a toy in giving me up so calmly. I could have forgiven him had he been poor; but his friends were rich and proud, like my own, and I had heard they were urging him to release me from my engagement on account of my father's overbearing conduct to them. My father laughed when he saw my passion, and said, 'He has saved you the trouble of discarding him; show a woman's pride, and forget.'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

MARGARET'S STORY CONTINUED.

"Thy suing to these men were as the bleating
Of the lamb to the butcher, or the cry
Of seamen to the surge."

"Ah, my child! when a woman loves, it is with difficulty she summons her pride. What cared I for pride? He was gone. The sun shone, but the light was darkness to me. I thought that every object in nature sorrowed for me—every sound was a sigh. Had Algernon told me, instead of writing, that he should leave me, I would have entreated him to take me with him to the farthest ends of the earth. I could not, in thought, separate myself from him. He was always with me, but it was a mournful presence. I listened for his voice; I looked for his smile; I held out my hand that he should clasp it. I fought against my destiny, and could not be consoled.

"My father was kind and stern by turns; it was

all the same to me. Algernon was gone. He reproved me, and even wept at the sight of my pale face. I told him *that* was useless; to recall Algernon, and I should be happy again. Oh, Irene! it was a cruel wrong to tear away life and hope from the young heart. He knew not what he did in dragging to the light the rebellious passions of my nature; he crushed all that was good within me. I never could understand how he could love me, and persist in making me wretched. Sometimes, he seemed on the point of yielding; yet such softness did not influence him long. He hoped that time would do its work for me, and it did.

"Irene, I did not know where to look for consolation. My father was not a religious man, though he had me taught, as is usual, certain principles connected with the Christian religion. I knew there was a God, but I thought not of him as being merciful. I often read the Bible, but did not apply its teachings. Through the day, I mechanically complied with the desires of my father, who thought by employment to interest my mind in other things. I obeyed all his wishes; but at night, when alone, I only wept. Oh, it is sad to think of a heart whose windows are closed forever, on whose threshold hope may never stand. And such was mine!

"My old nurse passed with me the sleepless nights. 'Child,' she would say, 'the Lord is good;

look up to him. You must wait until you get to heaven to be happy. There's no crying there.' I had heard her entreat my father for me; she risked his anger as she would have risked her own life, but it did no good.

"Days and weeks passed, and still I wept. I mourned, as it were, the death of my life; but the time came that my tears were dried. Then were crushed the joyous impulses of my nature; then died the first, best feelings of my youth. My father called me to him, and thanked me that I had become obedient and submissive, and said there was much happiness in the future for his dutiful child. He clasped me to his bosom, and *he* wept: but I felt that the sentence of my doom had been read. I was quiet, but cold and hard, like a rock, and unforgiving to him and to Algernon. One voice came to console me; it said, the grave! I listened for the summons to go and lie down in it and forget, but it came not.

"My father determined to make a visit to New York, which was his home previous to his marriage. Our preparations were made for a long absence, and we left the place where, most happily, passed my early years; where, for a short season, I had experienced the greatest happiness of which woman's heart is capable, and where, in the sudden breaking of strong ties, I had endured its extremest misery.

Man loves, and suffers, and changes, or forgets. If, indeed, he prove faithful, a softened regret is his utmost burden. But woman ventures her all when she loves. I do not refer to the every-day romances of life; but, where a woman of strong feeling and cultivated intellect yields herself up to an affection for one *who is worthy*, whatever be the other circumstances, it is happiness or misery forever, to her, in this world.

"Let me do my father justice. He loved me, and made every effort to amuse me, and make me happy. My friends, some of whom knew the circumstances that I have just told you, united with him to draw me away from my own thoughts. I went into all the dissipation of fashionable life, and I was vain of the admiration I excited. It was a blessing to me, my fondness for reading; it helped to pass the heavy hours. But I was almost always from home in some scene of gayety, and never knew a moment of real happiness. There *never* was a time, in that gay winter, but I would have thanked God could I have laid my head on *his* bosom and died. My father saw through the mask that I was wearing, and there was no limit to his fondness and indulgence. Then, more than at any other time, he softened to me, but was too proud to make advances to Mr. Murray, or to permit me to do so. He persuaded himself and almost convinced me, at times, that I was slighted

by Algernon's silence, in spite of the command that he had laid upon me to receive no communication from him. I had several other offers from men of standing and wealth, that I refused at once. But, while I loved Algernon Murray devotedly as at first, I nursed in my bosom, against him, a bitterness, a resentment, that he had left me to my fate; I did not realize the position in which my father's rudeness had placed him."

"Sometimes," said Irene, "my poor mother would become so exhausted that she would look unearthly. The shadows that lay beneath her eyes, from long illness, would seem to grow darker as by recalling the past, agonizing memories were stirred up. I would bid her rest; though unwillingly, for I was so anxious to hear all. Always, I fell asleep looking at her picture. The curls would seem to wave when the soft night winds were permitted to enter the room. The brow so calm, so fair, with the blue veins tracing their way beneath. Far more like life it looked than the emaciated, though still lovely face that lay on the pillow near me. Often, when I awoke, my father would be with her, and the two children."

CHAPTER XIX.

MARGARET'S STORY CONTINUED.

Mine after life! What is mine after life?
My day is closed! the gloom of night is come!
A hopeless darkness settles o'er my fate!

'"It was during the winter," thus my mother continued her history, "that I passed in New York, in the whirl of fashion and of folly, that I again met your father. Did I tell you that in the preceding summer he had passed a week at our house? He was then returning from New Orleans where business had taken him. We had never met before his visit to us in Georgia, and he was away from New York when we went there, but returned during the gay season. From the first he devoted himself to me, and my father saw his attachment with great pleasure. He did not wish me to return to Georgia to live, and therefore he encouraged your father's attentions to me. And other reasons influenced him. He was proud of your father's talents and of his position; every way the connection was agree-

able. I do not like to dwell here, Irene! But I must tell you that the importunities of my father and his friends almost drove me wild. I did not wish to marry, but they thought I would be happier, no doubt, to have objects on which my heart might rest. I threw myself on my father's bosom, and prayed him to recall Algernon, for that I could only be happy in his affection. 'Oh, heavens!' he said, 'that a woman can be so lost to her own self-esteem! Must I ask him to marry you? Shall I write to him and say, "Please come and take pity on my daughter." Where is your woman's dignity, Margaret?' I was silenced, but not convinced; yet I said to myself, why does he not come or write to me?

"One day my father said to me, 'Margaret, I want you to make me a promise that you will never mention Algernon Murray's name to me again. I am wearied to death with the subject. Had he really loved you, as I have often said, he would have tried, in some way, to communicate with you. Now, I declare solemnly, and in the presence of God, that whatever comes, I will never consent to your marriage with him.' Again I felt the strong will that was bending me to its purposes.

"'Promise me,' he said, 'for his very name is hateful to me, it has so long been a contention between us. You have so many blessings; what

more can you desire? Beauty, talents, position, and wealth. Edward Murray has, by this time, learned to love some other woman. Superior, as I allow he is to the rest of his family, I never knew one of them who could be depended upon. However this may be, can you make no sacrifice of your feelings for your father?'

"'Would you be happy if I made you this promise?' I asked.

"'I would indeed,' he said. 'All would be between us as it was before you knew Mr. Murray. There would be no discord, no coldness.'

"I looked earnestly at his face; there was no yielding there. I was conquered.

"'Will you forget him?' he said.

"'Oh, no! I shall always love him, and when you divided us, you destroyed all happiness for me in this world. I will promise what you wish. But I tell you now that had Algernon Murray spoken the word, I would have left all, even you, for him. But he thought your claim on my obedience and love was stronger than his, and he has left me to my fate. Whatever that fate may be, remember you have made it!'

"Oh, this was a time hard to bear, Irene! I will hurry past it. I was persuaded into a marriage with your father. I never deceived him, but told him honestly the state of my affections. My father

persuaded him that I was full of romantic notions, that would die away when I entered upon the duties of a wife. So he hoped, and he urged the marriage to take place with as little delay as possible. I was not willing. I felt that I *must see* Algernon once more; then, let what would come. Like some poor bird, I fluttered and beat my wings against my prison bars; but they were iron, and I could not escape.

"My daughter! I said 'if I have sinned, I have suffered.'

"Was it not a crime for me to stand at that holy altar, taking upon me those solemn vows, promising love, respect, obedience, in the presence of God and man, when my poor, restless heart was wandering in search of its other self? Where were the affections that your father might claim by right of that ceremony? Clinging still where they had once entwined. Robed in the garments of a bride, I was mocking God, man, and myself. While the recording angel was registering those vows, had I heard Algernon's voice, I would have fled from the very altar to follow him. I did not think that he would let me be sacrificed at the last; even in the church, I listened to every step, in the hope that he would come and take me to his heart. Was not this a sin to bring down the fearful judgments of Heaven? a sin over which angels might weep? Oh,

as I walked down the aisles of that church, there should have been stamped upon my brow, 'wretched woman and perjured wife.'

"Time softened to me the mental suffering through which I had passed. Your father brought me to this beautiful home, and every pleasure that wealth could command, and every indulgence, was lavished upon me. We travelled in our own country and in Europe during the first year of our marriage; but change of scene did not restore me to happiness, or even to cheerfulness. God pitied me, and sent you to lay against my heart and bid me hope. To nurse you, to make your clothes, to amuse you, these were my greatest pleasures. I rarely trusted you to a servant, excellent as were all about me. You were mine; I loved to think of you as mine only. I would take you in my arms to the grove, which is now your favorite place for reading; there I would sing you to sleep with songs that seemed to me, as I recalled the happy times when I had sung them before, in my dear southern home, like dirges for the dead. And when you slept, I would lay you on a pillow, surrounded by flowers; then, seating myself near, I would open some favorite book. Ah! too often blinding tears fell upon the page, too often thought, rebellious, wandered to scenes, and to one from whom my heart had never been weaned; too often, when I would cover your sweet face with

kisses, I would shudder at the consciousness that there was no love in my heart for the father of my child. Did I struggle against these fearful emotions? Oh, yes! but I knew not *how* to conquer them. Submission had not come. I had not learned to bow the head.

"Dearest, have I told you enough? You can see a meaning for the expression you heard me use. I cannot bear to distress you or myself more. Are you not satisfied?"

"No, no!" I said, "not till I know why my father made that vow about me. Do tell me all, I entreat you."

"Once more," she said, after a pause of a minute, "once more I saw Algernon. It was so lovely that evening, that as I look now from my death-bed towards the grove, were I a believer in fate, I should say nature had clothed herself in her fairest robes to tempt me to fill up the measure of my sorrow, and to add to that sorrow, sin. Your father had gone to New York on business, and did not expect to return until the morning. My father and I were sitting on the piazza that overlooks the Hudson. He was enlarging on the splendor of a house that was then in progress for us in the city. He lamented that I cared so little for the many luxuries that wealth placed in my power, and reproached me that

I did not take more interest in the enjoyments of society.

"'I like the quiet of this country home,' I said; 'and dread passing my winters in New York. Yet, as Mr. Hamilton wishes it, I am satisfied to go there.'

"'Satisfied!' my father exclaimed. 'A cold word to use, when your husband's first desire is to see you happy.'

"'I know it,' I said; 'but you are the last person to reproach me. I once told you that whatever might be my fate, you made it. And yet *you* blame me that I am not happy.'

"I got up to go away, for I had been ill all day, and was wretched. I wanted to be alone, and taking you from the nurse's arms, I turned my steps towards the grove. There I was rarely disturbed. I walked awhile with you in the shade of the trees; then seeing you asleep, I laid you on the pillow that had been left there since the morning; I threw myself down beside you. It was towards evening, and the grass felt cool to my burning, aching head.

"Since your birth, my daughter, I had been blessed with tears. My hard heart, melted by your caresses, often thus relieved itself, and bitter as they were at the time, it was good for me to shed them. So I laid by you and wept. All the past was present; I could not yet submit to my destiny; wed-

ded, and a mother, the yearning to see *him* once more—to hear him speak, wrung my soul. Could I be assured that *he* had not forgotten me, I would no longer strive against what was inevitable. Oh! Irene! I know this wish was sin. But, had I not been sinned against?

"As I thus wept, with my face covered with my hands, and pressed against the earth, a voice called me to myself: 'Margaret! is it indeed so?'

"One instant, and we were face to face. Oh! the joy of that moment. Was it sin? It was; O God, be merciful to me! Tempest tossed as I was, I basked in one moment's gleam of sunlight. I laid my head against his breast. Only for an instant he held it there, pressed his lips to my forehead, and then removed it, saying: 'Your place is not here, Margaret. I wish it were.'

"I burst forth into reproaches, not more violent than just. I told him there was no happiness for me in earth or heaven; that the weight of those awful vows was upon me, that, in my heart, I had never kept, I never could keep with his memory there. He tried to quiet my agitation, struggling with his own. He wept, but only for an instant, and then became calm and resolute. He told me that he had heard I was in ill health, and was not happy; that he hoped to learn that such was not the case.

"'I did not expect to see you,' he said; 'for though I knew I was near your husband's grounds, I did not know, until a moment ago, that I was upon them. I was to leave for New York this evening, after having had the accounts I had heard of you confirmed. There was a melancholy pleasure to me in wandering here among scenes that are your home. But when I saw you weeping there, beside your infant, I could not restrain my wish to speak to you.'

"'Oh!' I said; 'why did you not come and save me from all this sorrow, this sin? why did you ever give me up?'

"'Forgive me for it; I have since bitterly reproached myself for doing so. Yet, at the time, I thought I was doing right. All *that* is passed, Margaret! I cannot take you to my bosom to wipe away those tears, but if you bear up against what is adverse, if you steadily perform your duties as a wife and a mother, God himself will wipe them away.'

"I did not answer, and he went on. 'We have met again, only to separate. But, though our paths lie asunder, you alone shall possess my heart. No other woman can ever have a place there. If this is the least comfort to you, take it, I entreat you. And, though *we must* separate, be assured that all that concerns you in life, will be of the deepest in-

terest to me. I can submit to feel myself a sacrifice, but your unhappiness is the hardest trial of all. Could I know that you were happy, I could leave you now with less regret.'

"'Shall we ever meet again?' I asked.

"'I know not. Margaret! God has so constituted the heart, that when in grief, it can only truly find consolation in him. I told you this, in those happy days, that neither you nor I can ever forget. I repeat it to you now. Do we suffer? we are not to arm ourselves against the Creator; but we must remember that we are ordained to suffering, as the consequence of sin. It is the lot of all.'

"'I cannot understand you,' I said; 'but I wish I had your philosophy.'

"'It is not philosophy,' he replied. 'But only He who makes me submissive, can make you so. Oh! Margaret, we have both suffered, and we will both suffer more. But whatever I may be, with the consciousness that I have lost you forever, you should not be unhappy.' He raised you in his arms, Irene, and kissed you. 'The care of this lovely child,' he said, 'must be an infinite delight. Take it, and let me go; yet when you hold it to your heart, remember me as one who will always pray for your happiness.'

"He turned away, and I watched him as he went towards the woods, across which lay the public

road. How long I might have stood there unconscious, I cannot tell, but your cry brought me to a sense of the present moment. I looked up as I turned to go to the house, and near me, calm but colorless as death stood your father. My child! I must have done. It is enough. Because you were clasped in *his* arms, your father's were never more to enclose you. He vowed this, in his just anger, and in his great sorrow, and he has kept his vow. It was my long illness and suffering that softened him towards me. He could never blame Mr. Murray, and for me he found some excuse; but perhaps I would not have been entirely forgiven, but for what followed that wretched evening.

"You have known, Irene, of the malady that, years ago, hung like a curse over my father's family. Insanity—the greatest affliction that God brings upon his creatures. Before me, a long interval had elapsed since any member of our family had been so unfortunate. God saw fit to withdraw from me my reason. For three long years I languished in an insane asylum. In time, I recovered, and was restored to my family. Oh! I cannot tell you of the affection and the kindness that your father has showed me. Nor has he ever reproached me with my weakness, that was indeed a sin against him."

"How can you call it sin?" I said; "you were not to blame."

"Oh! yes! I was; I should not have assumed the sacred name of wife to one, while I loved another. Though, in a measure forced into marriage, I should have resisted more firmly. God forgive me that I so long afterwards cherished a sinful affection; *He* only knows how hard I struggled against it. I opened the Book that tells us of the human heart, and of what it owes to God. I saw how arrogantly I had set up my own will against the will of the Almighty. I comprehended the purity of the Divine law, and how the thought of the heart might be a deadly sin. I struggled against the sorrows that had oppressed me, and *God has wiped away my tears.*"'

"My mother closed her eyes as she ceased to speak. She had told me the history of a heart. I did not again disturb her. Soon I saw her pass into sleep—'the ante-chamber of death.'"

CHAPTER XX.

REPOSE.

There is a calm for those who weep,
A rest for weary pilgrims found;
They softly lie and sweetly sleep
Low in the ground.

"I SAID my mother died; and about that time, a cloud rests over my memory. I cannot say if she expired in the early morning, or at noon; I only know we did not talk together the night that followed. I watched her as she lay, pale, quiet, dead. I could not be persuaded from her; others looked tired, whispered, and slept in their chairs. I turned from the silent figure to the picture on the wall.

"That picture, as it appeared to me, looked at the corpse. Its expression changed on the canvas, mocking the changelessness of those marble features, calm in death. Calm, but not beautiful; there can be no beauty in death; there *is* beauty in the idea of the spirit's clinging to the loved ones left on earth, close, though unseen; watching, though unnoticed;

but those clammy, decaying walls where once the soul lived—

"I lifted my eyes from what was once my mother; the picture looked mournfully at the blighted form. I thought of the first death she had died; of the burial of her youth, of the putting out of sight of those hopes and desires that should have blossomed through her life; I looked up, and the eyes of the picture closed as in a solemn sorrow. Again I turned my eyes upon the face of the dead; I thought of the long struggle, the crushed affections, the life-time of sorrow, the sin, the repentance, the tears, and I looked to the painting; *then* the face was full of hope, radiant with joy. I did not know what to think; I would have laid down, not to sleep, but to rest by *her*, but they would not let me, and the night waned away.

"The time came for the funeral; they laid her in the grove at first; there, amidst her roses, with the brown cones of the pine clustering over her grave, she was left to rest.

"The little children, crying and frightened, had been carried away by the servants; the group of friends had scattered; my father and I remained standing by the newly laid earth. He looked round bewildered; my own deep sorrow was forgotten in the contemplation of his; his handsome brow was lined, as if each hour had made its mark, since she

had gone. I would have then implored him to pity my loneliness, to love me; but he perceived my presence, turned from me and left me standing there. Do you think I can forget *that?*

"I was weeping to leave her there, when a friend, who missed me at the house, came, seeking me. She led me home, and my long illness closed from me the knowledge of what followed, for a time."

CHAPTER XXI.

IRENE.

O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon;
Irrevocably dark! total eclipse,
Without all hope of day.

IRENE had finished. I kissed her and said: "Irene, God is your friend; trust him."

"He is! he is!" she exclaimed, "through spiritualism. Once, God spoke to me by the birds, the flowers, the sunshine, and the beautiful rain; they were my sweet companions and consolers; now I need others, so he sends me the spirits of my dear ones."

"Irene! the Bible was your mother's consolation in life and death; and you must fulfil your woman's destiny."

"What is that?" she asked.

"Love," I answered, "is a woman's all. As children, we love our parents and our nurses; as girls, our brothers—but as women—oh! Irene, what can compare with the love of a woman? Though, in the

Bible, there is a love spoken of as passing the love of woman. Strong indeed is the figure! Therefore, my sweet girl, should woman love God first, best. Doing this, she has something upon which to lean, should earthly support fail." I held her in my arms for a few moments. I noticed she was very feverish. Nor would she rest there, but disengaging herself from me, she sat up for a few moments, and then arranging some pillows against the foot of the bed, she leaned against them.

"Death," said Irene, after a pause. "What is death? Oh! I know I am immortal. But *where* will my spirit live? Is it an actual place, this mysterious abode? Will we know? will we be known? These thoughts are often wearisome to me. I seem to be grasping a shadow that goes from me, or listening to a voice that comes, I know not whence, or, as dreaming, seeing a light that turns to darkness. I wish I could know of the future.

> "Ah! Christ, that it were possible
> For one short hour to see
> The souls we loved, that they might tell us
> What and where they be."

"You cannot *now*, Irene," I said, "beyond what God has revealed to us in the Bible. You believe in that Holy Book?"

"Oh! yes," she said, though with some hesitation, "and I used to think as my mother did

about Christ, and heaven, and hell. But many of the spiritualists believe as my father does, only in a natural religion, or natural science. And they say that had God (if indeed there is a God) been what the Bible represents him, a God merciful to his creatures, then the good on earth would not be so tried. Look at my mother's trials! and, oh! how good she was."

"My dear Irene!" I said, "into what hands you have fallen!"

"Hush! let me tell you how my sister came to me at the moment of her death. I knew she was sick, and I wanted to go to her, but my father had not sent for me, and Mrs. Searle was sure that he would have done so, had Margaret been really ill. I *knew* it was true; a voice from within told me so. I sat, thinking of her and my mother; and Mrs. Searle was talking to me, but I did not understand a word that she said, for I was thinking too deeply of them, of myself too; of what was gone, and of what might come. But I did not dream Margaret could die; oh! no, I only thought she was ill and suffering, and I wanted to be with her, and to nurse her, as our mother would have done. I determined to try and wait patiently until the morning, when I might hear. But, soon I felt about me a motion like the fluttering of flowers in the faintest breeze, and the angelic child was there, radiant, in her new life, in all the

purity and glory of the celestial nature that she had just assumed; indeed I saw her, and she spoke to me in sweet accents, and told me to go home.

"Mrs. Searle would not believe me when I told her of it, but she took me home, and there, in a coffin, lay the poor empty shell that had once contained a pearl so precious. Now she is often with me—at this moment I see her—she beckons me—oh God! she calls me."

"Irene! my child, hush; oh! try and calm yourself to sleep."

She would not let me touch her, but sprang up and commenced walking rapidly through the room; I could not persuade her to lie down again. Her condition, her appearance, was frightful. Such brilliant eyes, such burning cheeks and lips I never saw. She talked to some spirit that she fancied was there, and every instant she grew worse. At one moment she laughed, at another she wept. I thought to go for Mrs. Searle, but she saw my intentions, and springing to the door, she said no one should come in. I made the greatest effort to conceal my fears that the crisis had come.

It was here! Irene was a maniac before me. And yet how glorious was the fair temple in its fallen state! Never had she looked so splendidly as now. Over her night-dress her long black hair hung, almost to her feet. It waved about her arms and

shoulders in heavy locks. Her skin so fair, save where the flush of fever dwelt. The beauty of her features, the grace of every gesture!

I had lowered the gas when we laid down. Irene raised it to its greatest height, and lit all the burners of the chandelier, in spite of my entreaties; she said she could not see her friends by so dim a light.

Presently I succeeded in getting to the door, and hastening to Mrs. Searle's room, I awoke her; always anxious about Irene, she immediately understood, and threw on her dressing gown. I could not persuade myself to go back to Irene without her, so alarmed had I become.

Already her screams had been heard in the near rooms, and persons were looking in the hall to inquire the cause.

Seeing us approaching, Irene waved us away, and then passing us suddenly, she flew from the room; we followed her, and when I called her, she stopped, but did not seem to know who was calling her.

Mrs. Searle had knocked at the Professor's door in passing; he was up and was dressing; he heard the first melancholy cry, and recognized the voice; he came from his chamber, and, at a glance, saw it all.

"Merciful God!" he exclaimed, "is it so? Irene! my child, my child!" the voice once so dear roused

her to a frenzy. I will draw the curtain over this sad scene.

In a few days, we took her to Hartford; I cannot tell the mournful details. Her refusal of food, her dislike to us all, her constantly addressing some unseen visitors, her affecting appeals to her dead mother—to her living father.

Where was he? He should have been there to see the wreck his unforgiving heart had helped to make.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RESULT.

"Oh! death in life."

Is she dead?

Hers is a living death; a grave where there is no peace, no repose.

It has been a year since we placed her in the asylum. Her father came home, but he has never had courage to see her; he bears up, a friend says, with the pride of a philosopher.

God help him. I know there is a worm at his heart, a never-dying worm. And he writhes with his sorrow, and thinks that fate deals hardly with him. Yet he closed his heart against his own child. "Oh, man, how often dost thou complain of overshadowing grief, and of darkness resting upon thy days! And yet what cause for complaint, unless, indeed, thou hast failed to learn wisdom from suffering."

He failed to learn.

Mrs. Searle and I went several times to see Irene

during a recent visit of mine to the North. She did not know us, and told us to go away. No one sees her now but those who have charge of her.

The last time we went, we were walking through the hall of the asylum, lingering near that part of the house where Irene was. She had been removed where those were whose disease had assumed hopeless symptoms. Mrs. Searle begged the doctor to let her see once more her adopted child; he kindly but firmly refused, reminding her of the last sad scene that transpired when we were admitted to her presence.

"Show me her room then," said Mrs. Searle, weeping.

"There, with those bars and the closed curtains?"

"Why not raise the curtains?" said Mrs. Searle. "Her room must be gloomy and dark; my beautiful Irene cannot live in a prison. Why have you darkened the window?"

The doctor hesitated; but as Mrs. Searle persisted in her questions, he said, "Dear madam, her case is the saddest in this prison-house for erring reason. She cannot bear the sight of a fellow-creature; if that curtain were raised, and any one were to cross the yard, the sight would distract her. Would you go to her now, and destroy the only hope of her improvement?"

"Do you see improvement? *Can't* you give me hope?"

"We *must* hope," the physician said; "it is most afflicting to me when I cannot say all I would wish. When Miss Hamilton's father is here; when I look at his stern, pale face, I feel I would give all that I own to be able to say she is better; and, madam, when I hear of the 'circles' of the Spiritualists, I long to bring those people here, to show them the ruins of fair persons and of noble minds, to tell them to hear the shrieks of the spirit mad, to look at their own work. I have no patient over whom I have grieved so much as your adopted daughter; her loveliness; her touching language in the now short intervals of calmness; the fading of her beauty; the loss of the color in her cheek; the black shadows underneath her eyes—used as I am to sad sights, I never leave her without a tear."

This was my last visit to Irene, and I learn from Mrs. Searle there is no improvement. Her grief is very great. Ah, she took the Bible from the hands of the child so sacredly committed to her care! Does she think of *that* now?

For Irene I must, I will hope. Her mother's prayers—they are not lost. Oh, may her reason return, however feebly, however faintly! if it only be for a moment, that she may look up to the Cross. Those eyes, so glorious once, but dimming now,

could they but close forever while gazing upon it. Then *the world* having failed her in the hour of need, how sweetly upon her soul would steal the revelation of infinite love!

What may we learn from her sad history? The human mind must submit to the limits that God has imposed upon it here. Do we desire to penetrate the great mystery, Death?

Let us know Him who said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

* * * * *

These dreams of the night, these waking dreams that come when the day's toil is past. To me, at this hour, meditation is at once a necessity and a delight. I cast away the remembrance of the duties and the cares that have occupied me; there is a little time I call my own. There is nothing that my hands may find to do; I fold them for a pleasant idleness, as I establish myself in the arm-chair. I like the stillness and the solitude. There is no one with me but my sleeping children; no eye, save that of the All-seeing, watches me.

Now, fancy ranges unbounded and uncontrolled; she revels, she sports, she broods gloomily at her will! She conjures up phantoms that are not altogether visionary, for some of them memory inspires with life. Now, imagination takes wing; she flies to scenes far away; she brings before me the long

absent; she cheats me by the remembrance of a voice, a look, a touch of the hand; the hope of reunion, under her influence, becomes a certainty, and I dash away the tears that have gathered at the recalling of a parting hour.

I meditate on death, on life, on the conventional requirements of society, on the heartless forms and pleasures of fashionable life. Strangely appear the doings of the world when here, so calmly, I muse upon them. I laugh when I might well weep over the follies that are every day enacted. I close my eyes, and the forms of my friends pass before me, as on a stage, each acting his or her part in the passing scene. This world—I cannot penetrate its mysteries. Well might Carlyle say, "it abounds in miraculous combinations, far transcending anything they do at Drury Lane in the melo-dramatic way. A world which, as solid as it looks, is made all of aerial, and even of spiritual stuff."

Irene! most sadly my thoughts have taken form and turned to you, tracing out your history. What is it but a reverie of the night? You stand before me arrayed in melancholy beauty; I almost see you as I look towards the open door, without which is only darkness. You speak to me, as from a living tomb, in accents most mournful to hear. Yet are you the child of many prayers, and in the ark of God's mercy you may be safe.

"THIS IS THY WORLD, AND A PRECIOUS WORLD IT IS."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A HEROINE.

We were talking this evening of Grace Darling, and of other heroines, and I said that heroines were much more plenty than the world thought. The general impression is that romance is only to be found in novels, but there is a great deal of it in real life. There are many people that I know, whose lives have been full of romance, and for one, there is Addie Carroll. And if it will be a satisfaction to any of my readers to be assured of the truth of what I am telling them, I assure them *it is true.* I have not exaggerated more than authors are expected to exaggerate. I have colored a little, I'll allow, but not more than Mrs. Bailey does—the pretty widow. The only difference is, that I use ink, and she prefers imitating nature, and uses red, or as the French translate it—rouge.

Not that I think unkindly of my friends as I sit here at night alone. Oh, no! nor do I wish to be

considered as finding fault with Mrs. Bailey. Who will blame a woman for looking as well as she can, especially a widow!

The great fault of the present system of education is, it seems to me, that it teaches a woman to care for nothing but how she looks in the eyes of the world. What will Mrs. Washington Potts say? is the true translation of every circular that is issued now-a-days by the schools? And this brings me at once to my heroine, who was brought up to love the world with all her heart, and her neighbors (foreigners) as herself. There was a golden rule, too, that she heard about very often, but the amount of it was, that money was the thing most to be desired (after a title). Strange principles to hold in American society!

As regards the early life of my heroine, it will be enough for me to say, that she was born in—The World, and brought up in The World. It was her privilege to be the daughter of a mother who would have sacrificed anything and everything to fashion. Her ideas were not far astray of the Georgian and Circassian slave trade; all that a woman's beauty or charms were worth, was to secure a high bid for her when the season came. As to love, Mrs. Carroll does not believe in it; says it is all stuff! The prominent idea of marriage, with her,

is, a four story house, Persian carpets, and a carriage. These secured, a woman has accomplished the object of her creation.

Nor was Addie the only one upon whom her mother might experiment, for Mrs. Carroll had eight daughters. Eight grown-up, handsome, intelligent, well educated, and accomplished daughters. I say Mrs. Carroll, for Mr. Carroll, a mild, quiet person, cut an unimportant figure in his own house, or rather, he cut no figure at all. He was of small account, farther than to go to market, and to pay the grocery bill. Mrs. Carroll was master and mistress, and she was very notable and an excellent manager. A real woman of the world she was (and is), and though there was a church opposite her front door, and two others in the same square, she thought no more of the *other* world than if she had been born and brought up on the banks of the Ganges.

But, though a most excellent manager, in things of *this* world, Mrs. Carroll had not yet *managed* to get one of her eight daughters off her hands. How was this? had she not given them every advantage? Did not each one know a little of everything? a smattering of botany, philosophy, mathematics, and Latin. Could they not speak French, one and all? Was there one of the eight that did not play polkas to perfection? Could they not all dance and waltz

like fairies, and courtesy killingly? Who could make preserves and pickles, and purses, and cake, and dresses, and jellies, better than they! Were they not all *au fait* to the useful and ornamental in life? trained to be capital wives for rich men—or for men not rich; for a bachelor president—or widower, his private secretary, a senator, a member, foreign minister, attaché, army man, or passed middy, doctor, lawyer, clerk, or any such that fate might send along?

And how had Mrs. Carroll toiled for this! how had she economized, to dress eight daughters elegantly on a small income; and, besides being dressed, they had to be fed; and then the servants' wages, and fifty other things, all out of two thousand a year. How she had turned and twisted dresses and mantillas by day, to keep up appearances, and, poor woman! how had she turned and twisted herself at night, unable to sleep, her brain excited, yet wearied out with useless planning and cogitating.

All to no purpose! Sophie, and Maria, and Lizzy, Carry, Jane, and Addie, Florence, and Emily, were all at home beauless and fading; eight as pretty, useful, good tempered women, as you would wish to meet with; the youngest still fresh and blooming, the eldest, sadly passée.

What was the secret of it? all the world said; what does it mean? eight such nice, good girls, with

handsome eyes, fine teeth, and excellent dispositions; —why don't they marry? women of good family, stylish in their manners, unexceptionable in their deportment, habituées of receptions, matinées, and assemblies, and constant attendants at church. Why don't the men propose? said the world. And this was the very question that Sophie, and Maria, and Lizzy, asked themselves continually. The very question that Mrs. Carroll asked herself every evening, as she looked around on her pretty, graceful daughters. The very question that the men themselves asked, as they took their hats and bowed themselves out of the society of these eight handsome women—I may say nine—for Mrs. Carroll was as pretty as any of her daughters, and what was surprising, considering the wear and tear of fashionable life, she looked almost as young as any of them.

For, it is a wear and tear, to live in a large city, to belong to a fashionable clique, and to keep up appearances on next to nothing. Deliver me from genteel poverty! it is one of the curses of society. Think of the money it took to provide becoming morning dresses for eight young women; to furnish materials for their skirts (these they always embroidered themselves); to buy their slippers (that they were forever covering with their old party-dresses); to stocking their pretty feet; to purchase dresses of

silk, and lawn, and barège. Oh, the bills for pomatum and gaiter boots! for tarleton, and sashes, and French flowers! for bracelets and hair-pins! for hack hire and Cologne water! Oh, the money that it took to go to the springs, to call back the bloom that was paling in those sixteen cheeks! Then, it was continually, visiting cards, and bouquets, and new music, and bonnets, and opera cloaks; and the thousand and one follies that city girls must have, or they lose caste, and may possibly fall, wretched victims! into the second best society. Life was a real treadmill to Mrs. Carroll; she was always on the go, shopping at cheap stores, beating down merchants, or their prices, promising to discharge debts, and adding to those that never could be discharged. Do you not pity her? I would rather be a factory girl making cotton forever; a common-school teacher, feruling the badness out and the new ideas into the heads of her victims; a little Southern negro, having her ears boxed fifteen times a day, than to be in bondage to the world, ashamed of a poverty that all the turning and cleaning of silk dresses, and dyeing of merinos in creation, will never hide; a bondage that makes a woman strive to look as well, or *as fine* with her dollar, as her friend looks with her million; a bondage that brings with it anxiety and debt; and, debt in such a case, is dishonesty.

"I'll tell you the secret of their not marrying,"

said Mary Gardner, as we were one evening discussing the Carrolls. "They are all so pretty and so good, so clever and so much alike, that when a gentleman is pleased with one, he is pleased with all, and he does not know which to decide upon. There's Tom," she continued, looking archly at a young gentleman near her, and to whom she was engaged to be married. "Tom was in love with Addie, and then he thought Carry pleased him the most; but he was not sure but what Sophie suited him best, so he could not make up his mind. You ought certainly to have taken one of them, Tom, after paying them so much attention."

"It was your fault," said he, quietly; at which we all laughed, for Tom was a handsome fellow, just home from a four years' cruise. At first, he was every night at the Carrolls', until—so every one in the neighborhood said—until Mary Gardner drew him off. However this may be, it is certain that Tom Merchant offered Mary Gardner his hand and heart, and half-pay, dead or alive; all that most sailors can offer, and most women are glad enough to accept it, too.

"*I'll* tell you how it is about those Carrolls," said Mrs. General Clarke; "the men have become so thoroughly selfish now-a-days, they talk about a girl's paying her own mess bill. Their cigars and their sherry cobblers cost so much that they can't

afford to marry for love. Though it does require a good deal of courage to marry a woman with seven sisters. I declare it looks like Mormonism, and so many queer things are happening every day that it might end in it. If he marry one, something might turn up that he would feel obliged to marry all, and perhaps the mother into the bargain, if poor old Mr. Carroll should give out suddenly. But, to speak seriously, those girls are to be pitied. What would they do if their father should die to-morrow? He would leave them nothing but debts, which his wife has incurred; and they are all refined, and several of them are intellectual women, accustomed to such indulgences, too, as only the very rich should enjoy. What *will* they do when left to themselves, with their proud notions and expensive habits?"

"If I were one of them," said Mary Gardner, "I would emigrate."

"Where to?" said Tom, whose voice was heard from out of the general laugh. "To Australia?"

"To St. Paul's, Minnesota," said Mary, again. "I'd be taken with a missionary fit, and I'd go to Miss Somebody, and tell her I was dreadfully anxious about the souls of the little heathens within our own shores, and I'd get my expenses paid out by the society that she and Dr. Somebody-else started. I'd have to engage to teach for two years, of course; but as soon as I got out there,

I'd set my cap for a young doctor, who had come there to make a start, and I'd marry the doctor, *malgré lui*, and then the little heathens might look out for themselves."

"A very nice scheme," said Mrs. General; "but how can it be carried into execution?"

"A friend of mine could tell you," said Mary; "she went out to Missouri to teach for two years, and in six months fell in love and married. She is living comfortably now on a fine farm. I dare say she feels a little conscientious about the travelling expenses."

How strange, that at this very time Addie Carroll was trying to get up courage to tell her mother that she minded to cut loose from the old ship, and venture out in her little canoe on the great river of life; and what suggested this figure was the fact that she had fallen in with Miss Simpson, when the latter, in one of her forays into the southern country, axe in hand, to uproot the sins of a slave-holding soil, had discoursed eloquently on this project of hers, winning Addie's heart so completely that she volunteered her services, and was received, so to speak, into the regiment of maidens who were to enlighten the benighted condition of the poor heathen children (and bachelors). Addie was excessively smitten with Miss Simpson, and with her plans, and could not rest until her affairs were entirely settled. She was

to be stationed at the famous St. Paul, that, a few years ago, consisted of three tenements—a drinking shop, a Romish chapel (in the style of a wood-shed), and a pig-sty, but has since swelled into a great and fair city, built on the hills, with the giant river rolling at her feet, with churches innumerable towering towards the brilliant skies that hover over the flowery prairies and lingering snows of the north-west.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GOD AND MAMMON.

How did it come about that Addie Carroll thought of helping herself? Is there anything that a woman does not think about, especially a quiet woman and one that is inclined to be pale? Is there, I ask, anything dreamed of, in or out of philosophy, that does not glance before a woman's mental vision at one time or another? I mean a true woman, out of whose heart the world has not crushed all that is fresh and noble. But that idea of independence, of self-exertion—how could it have got into her head or heart? Educated by her mother to bow, and bend, and cringe to the favor of the world, how did the notion of supporting herself set all these aside? Oh! there are strange things, "shy secrets," in a woman's nature, and who can say what will *not* happen! I have walked on those prairies whose unsurveyed domains had found a place in Addie's thoughts, and I have looked to the north, to the south, to the east, and to the west, and there was only snow. Only

snow, though the voice of spring was calling over the dazzling crust, whose crystals were glittering in the sun. I have followed the beaten path, asking myself, when will the grass come and the flowers? and then I laughed at my folly in thinking of grass and flowers when there was nothing to be seen but the winter's snow. And lo! at my feet, a delicate blue chalice has found for itself a way to look up to God; then, I take courage to hope for the summer, amid all the surrounding desolation. So in the heart of woman, there may be a faith, a beauty, a glory, that the world, its dictates, its threats, or its promises, may never hide, or if indeed covered for the while, will work itself through when the time comes.

The time came to Addie Carroll, who was indeed the diamond among the jewels that were flashing in vain, lost in each other's light. She had an energy, a will, a moral courage that had slumbered, the more vigorously to act when awakened. And what called it forth?

What is it that causes that ocean wave to lash, and sweep beneath it every opposing obstacle? What is it that raises to a mountain height the desert sand, driving its fiery course over man and beast, and leaving them buried without a mark? What makes the winds roar, as with fury, and hurl from the mountain summits, rocks that are lost in the darkness and immensity of the chasm beneath?

I hear you answer, God! And God speaks to a woman's heart, and it hears, and nerves itself to undertake things both small and great. God spoke to Addie Carroll's heart.

But is God in the fashionable world? Will he dwell amid the pomp, and strife, and folly of those who call themselves the aristocrats of society? Is he not far from such as they? Hush! hush! God is everywhere. His temple may be the heart of a king or of a poor slave, and he abides with the rich as with the poor. He would come to us all would we receive him. But too often we say, "Give me my portion now." And God spoke to Addie Carroll's heart; gently, but as plainly as when he called to little Samuel. At first, an angel might have spoken, but if so, God gave that angel its commission, and it passed to the earth through the clouds, and over the arch of the rainbow, and descended noiselessly, entering the house that, as yet, had neither welcomed nor desired an angel guest. But this one, though uninvited, was, oh! how welcome! for beneath that roof there was one poor child of fashion that longed to flee away and be at rest. She was weary of the formal dinner, the soiree, the ball, the noisy revelry of the life she led. Her soul said, "I have no pleasure in them." She knew not of the presence of that great witness of God in the soul—that thirst that the world only fevers, but can never allay. But it

was there. She drank—but she thirsted again. She had not thought of the gift of God—the living water. Oh! the world! the world! Oh! the brows, aching though crowned with flowers! the bosoms heavily heaving beneath their jewelled bouquets! the souls seeking to hide under a false glare their sepulchral darkness. Oh! the arrows that are planted in the heart! crushed aspirations, hopeless love, remorse, despair! The world! old man! what has it done for thee, with thy trembling hand, shuffling those painted cards, or holding to thy withered lips the intoxicating cup? Fair woman! what has the world done for thee? paralyzed the sweet emotions of thy nature, and placed a wall, unyielding, though unseen, between thee and thy God? Youth! oh! what holds the world in its hand as it beckons thee to follow? Only the sorrows that shall entangle thy feet, when thou shalt give it thy heart! Reflect before taking another step. As yet thou art pure! thou hast not fallen! turn again ere choosing that broad path towards which so many press!

Full of such thoughts was Addie's mind, as nightly she made one of some crowded scene of pleasure, and her pride revolted at being dragged from place to place, her hair adorned, showing to the best advantage; her fair shoulders displayed, her graces paraded off, to catch a husband! She pitied her oldest sisters who were wearied and

jaded with their aimless life—but who were now unfitted for any other. Still more, she pitied her young sisters who had the same road to go over, with no cheering certainty as a reward for the fatigue and anxiety they might undergo. She felt almost indignant that *she* should be trotted out, night after night, in hopes of a *good bid.* Yet, her mother's anxiety to see some of them married seemed perfectly natural and excusable. For what, she asked herself, can we helpless women do when left dependent on the world? too proud are we to work, too poor to live. She almost laughed at the absurd reality as it presented itself.

Such were her first reflections, but better thoughts came after. Her mind, that was naturally devotional, looked over the sea that skirted her land of bondage. And after a little, by an agency invisible to her, a path was made for her to pass over. God held the dangerous waters that they touched her not, while she shook from her wrists the iron chain. He showed her a promised land to which, as a home, she might aspire. He reared for himself within her, a fair temple where his spirit might dwell—amid the strong womanly instincts, the upright sense of honor, the fervent love of nature that he had, at her birth, implanted in her heart. He filled this temple with his own presence. Oh! then Addie *felt* these simple words that the infant lisps—*God made me.* She felt

these words, "I was glad when they said, let us go unto the house of the Lord." She listened as the preacher discussed the animating truths of religion. Before her eyes, was the picture that Mercy saw at the Interpreter's house; the cross glistened above, and Muck-rake grovelled in the earth at her feet. Where should she look? As ever towards the heavens; for the eyes that had all along seen only the crimson pillars of clouds with their glorious tintings of light, saw now a greater brightness beyond, and God was there. She unwound her way from the mazy labyrinth in which she was entangled—it seemed a mystery to her at first, but like the prince of the east she saw "Conquer in this," in the mystic sign, and clasping it to her heart she determined to bear it ever there, though at first her steps almost failed her with weariness, even as His did, toiling up Calvary.

For some time there were difficulties in her way. Her mother contended with her, and spoke with contempt of her new notions, and was angry when she refused to lead the life that all around her led. And then the thought came, she would, for a time, separate herself from home, and seek employment that would be independence, eating no longer the bread of idleness and folly. Her heart seconded the motion of her brain. "Up, and be doing," it

said to her; "God never tires, never rests. Shall his servants be idle when the harvest time is come."

When her plans for action were matured, she talked of them first, to her quiet, but kind and indulgent father. He smiled at what he called her visionary projects, but so often she sought him, that her very earnestness stood her friend. She was his best beloved, for her generous and affectionate impulses drew from him an interest that he could not feel in his other children. Addie and he often wandered in the woods near the city, for Mr. Carroll's only real pleasure seemed to be in taking long walks. He and his daughter loved to look upon the beauties of the heavens and of the earth.

"I cannot, dear father," Addie would say, as they wandered on, her arm locked in his—"I cannot bear to see you so bent and worn, depriving yourself even of necessary rest and repose, to give us so many useless indulgences. We are living too, far beyond our income, and I feel that this is not right. We are crushing you to the earth with over-exertion, and some of us should try to do for ourselves. Your day of toil should be over, and each day we are making heavier your burden. Oh! this should not be so! In return for all your love, let me care for myself, for the education that you have given me will enable me to do so. At least I will try, and I shall be most happy if I succeed. If I fail, I shall only

come back to you, which I shall do, at any rate, after a while. Be my advocate with my mother, and help to persuade her to allow me to go to the West. Here I am useless, for were I to die to-morrow, except as far as affection is concerned, no one would miss me, and I am persuaded that God never made man or woman but that he or she might aid in working out his benevolent purposes."

Mr. Carroll referred his daughter to her mother, venturing a word in her favor, but each received tears and reproaches for answer. When Mrs. Carroll understood Addie's wishes and views, she refused to allow her to go, and Addie felt that for the present she must give up, for obedience to her parents, where it did not interfere with obedience to her God, was her first earthly duty.

But when Mrs. Carroll heard all—how her favorite and loveliest daughter felt obliged to refuse gay society—intending to connect herself by a public profession with the church, and not formally, but with a firm resolve to act up to its requirements, by renouncing the world—her anger became grief and mortification. Some time passed in frequent discussion, and she found her daughter could not, and would not agree to spend all her time in the trifling routine of fashionable engagements. She was dismayed at the scandal that would be the inevitable result of the world's knowledge of her family

affairs. Her authority would seem to have been set aside, and her child would be denounced as a Methodist. This was too much for her to bear; she consented to be separated from her, believing that Addie's religious opinions were from the excitement of the day, and that they would pass away as quietly as they had approached. She even assisted her to prepare for her trip to the West, hoping she would soon return cured of her folly, and ready to enter, with a new zest, into the game of life, where women play for the one stake—an establishment. And Addie moved quietly about, with a brave heart, looking forward towards the unknown wilds, feeling that the worst was over when her mother's consent to her project was obtained.

Is it a little thing to come out from the world? to brave its censure—to bear its scorn—to hear its slighting laugh—to see its long finger, in derision, pointed to your face? Oh no! when a woman breaks down the bars of conventionalism, that society has put up, to shut her out from energy, from hope—from all that is good, from God! when she does thus, she is a heroine. She is stronger than one who could bear on his shoulders the huge gates of a city, and braver than he who would rush singly to oppose ten enemies, armed with weapons more deadly than his own. And Addie, though still young, was tired of the world—tired of its glitter and its noise,

tired of the flashing of jewels and the rolling of carriages. She knew there was no real happiness in all this. Perhaps, she said to herself, there is *no happiness* in this world; she did not aspire to it, but her words might have been, "Let a passionless peace be my lot."

Sorrow was to come first; bitter tears were to be shed at the parting from home; a bosom was to rise and fall with sobs, when the last look faded away. Poor child! for the time all hope —all desire fled. Yet the railroad car flew with its burden of anxious souls, and the changing scenes through which she was so swiftly borne, amused her mind. There were pleasant travelling companions who laughed at her gloom, and tried to chase it away. Gradually it parted like the mists, when the sun advances towards them. On the cars whirled, and before many days the broad river, with its waves like the sea, lay before her. It was a pleasant sight, and as she looked upon it, that saddest of all sicknesses—homesickness—was forgotten. Addie saw, towering, the hills of her new home, and her heart bounded as she thought that here she might not live in vain.

Let whoever reads this, remember that seven years ago, when Addie Carroll landed at St. Paul's, St. Paul's was not what it is now. There were not then such churches and school-houses. Oh! I wish

you could have seen the school-room into which Addie was introduced the day after her arrival. The ardor of the young missionary was damped. But I ought not to call her by such a name. She did not claim it. She would not have gone to Africa on any account, and Africa is the test, to try a missionary spirit. Addie wanted, in plain English, to work for her living; but she prayed to be made useful in her sphere. Perhaps I should call her an adventurer.

If, then, you could have seen the young adventurer, her school-room, and her scholars, when they were first introduced to each other. As to the room, it was a horrid fixture, the boards tumbling down, and half plastered. In it there were a chair for Addie and some benches for her pupils. The door opened right into the street, and when it was shut, the pigs, expert from long habit, thrust it apart with their noses, and, effecting an entrance, were often ejected with trouble.

For the pupils, Addie commenced with ten, and in a fortnight there were twenty, such as they were. One or two of them were the children of Christians, but the rest were the representatives of all the heathen and barbaric tribes that the great American continent can present. Some of them were Gumboes (a mixture of French and Indian); then, there were those who had white fathers and Sioux mothers, and negro grandfathers and Winnebago grandmothers.

No doubt it could be done, if our literati had proper materials to work upon, but it would be a tough job to trace these young ones back to Adam and Eve; and any of the strongest advocates of the unity of the race who may be induced to attempt this job, should choose the coolest weather, for he will have warm work, and never will accomplish it satisfactorily to himself or to anybody else; not but the unity of the race is a fact beyond the power of man or angel to disprove, but in this case it would be difficult to trace the succession.

But there would be no trouble about Addie. She could be traced straight up to Eve; her fair skin, brown eyes, and browner hair, spoke better things than history. She might have been taken for Eve herself, had she been seated in a beauteous garden listening to some Adam's Miltonic speeches. As it was, she was a contrast to her dingy complexioned scholars. Such a looking set as they were, with their piercing black eyes, and long, straight, uncombed hair, big mouths, and dirty hands. Poor Addie! she used to beg them, with tears, to go home and wash their faces, and she shrunk from the touch of their hands. For a long time, she would often put her fingers in her ears to shut out their jargon, a mixture of English, and Indian, and French; while the only words that she could at all understand were such words as never should be uttered or heard.

She was immensely disgusted; there is no use in denying it, and she was often homesick, and would shed great tears on her cotton pillow-case. Oh! how disheartened she became, but she would not give up. She would never go home and say, I have failed. So she labored on.

The loss of society was a great loss to her, fitted by habit and by education to enjoy it. It was hard to be so frequently thrown among coarse and ignorant people; she shrunk from the association. But were they worse than many who were received with smiles by her mother? men broken down by dissipation, unfit to enter the presence of those who overlooked their sins for their money or position. Often, too, she felt the want of recreation; but at home, had she wearied less of the eternal round of visiting and gayety, where she was hawked about, ticketed like Ethel Newcombe, For Sale. Addie wiped away her tears when she thought of that; indeed, she had better use to which she might put her fine eyes, than crying.

From her little windows, the city-bred maiden looked out upon scenes such as she had only read or dreamed about. When her teaching for the day was done, she looked forth upon the new land unto which she had come. Such clouds! such hills! such a glorious river! such trees! and such fair little lakes! It was October when she arrived at St.

Paul's, and by the time that November was through, her homesickness was effectually cured. That Indian summer in Minnesota! Addie felt that it was worth a great deal to see it, and it did not entirely pass from her; when it bade adieu to nature, there was a sort of Indian summer hue upon her feelings. There was, to be sure, a mazy uncertainty in her prospects; but there was a deep interest in all that was going on around her, that lightened every care, as the red glow brightens up all nature. It was a new life; nothing could be said distinctly of the future, but there was light in the distance, and the hope of success urged her to patience and to energy.

The hope of success! in what? Why, in earning her own bread, and in doing something for her fellow-creatures. The winter came, and things looked better. The children began to wash their faces and hands, and to love their beautiful teacher. The little heathens, to please her, tried to speak English, and left off swearing and stealing each other's lunch. Besides, a better class of people were coming in; their children came to school, and their good conduct and studious habits excited others to emulation. There was better behavior—and cleaner hands. The pigs, too, were learning to know their place; they rarely ventured within the precincts of learning, and if so, ran off at the first manifestation of displeasure at their presence. All this was very encouraging.

But there were better things still in store for Addie, and for St. Paul's. The meditative girl saw this, and while she hoped for herself, she rejoiced in the certainty that for St. Paul's there was a brilliant future. Small beginnings there were as yet, but there must be no turning back, for St. Paul's was destined to be the great city of the northwest. Addie felt a pride and pleasure in thinking that she was the first female teacher in that city, and that one day, when she should be old, children would point her out as having come when this great city was nothing, and she laughed when she imagined herself an old lady, with a mob cap, walking with a stick.

But what right had she to look forward to being in St. Paul's when she should be old? It is not my affair to meddle with any plans that Addie might make for herself, for a woman's thoughts are her own, so that they be good and pure. However, I will say, in all these plans she did not trust entirely to herself, but took the advice of a young lawyer.

The two years had passed away for which Addie considered herself pledged to the society that had paid her expenses out, and they had passed pleasantly, too. Such sleigh-rides up the Mississippi, and down the Mississippi, and up the St. Peter's, and down the St. Peter's, as Addie used to have with a young law-

yer, the same that I spoke of as advising her in regard to her future plans, to do which was always very convenient for him, for they boarded in the same house. Such rides! such flights, as I may call them, as they used to have across the prairies in summer in a Boston chaise! and such fishing excursions as they had to the Spirit Lakes! Such walks and talks as they had around and about St. Paul's! The young lawyer was always at hand (as indeed young lawyers always should be), and Addie and he accomplished wonders at St. Paul's. They got up a singing society, that came to be the choir of the Episcopal church, and they put their names to the Temperance Society, and in fact they put their names to everything good that was going on. And while Addie was taking great pride in her flourishing school, and the young lawyer was getting into practice, the city of St. Paul's seemed to be, like Jonah's gourd, springing up in a night, and a pretty cottage was being built on one of the city's highest locations, under the young lawyer's superintendence. And just as the cottage was finished, and the grounds so tastily laid out, Addie left St. Paul's in a steamer, the young lawyer standing on the wharf, and watching the steamer until it was out of sight. Where was our young adventurer going? home. There she arrived safely, and was folded to her father's bosom, and to her mother's, too. She was more

beautiful than ever, and looked fresh and blooming as a rosebud among her sisters, who drooped around her. She was tired with her journey, and slept sweetly that night in the old home, to which she had been so affectionately welcomed.

The next morning, Mrs. Carroll breakfasted again with her eight daughters, and Mr. Carroll could not look away from his newly-recovered child.

"Addie," said Mrs. Carroll, "Count ——— is here, and he has the most magnificent moustaches! All the girls are dying in love with him, and you must bear away the prize from them. You are so blooming, after your western trip, that I shall expect you to make a great impression upon the count. He is in New York now, but will be back in a month; it is said he has a splendid establishment in Paris, but likes our country so well that he cannot bear to leave it. Oh, I should so like to see one of my daughters a countess!"

"I would not be a countess for all the world!" said Addie, "and I am afraid I will not see the count, for I have promised to go back to St. Paul's in three weeks."

Mrs. Carroll looked aghast. "Addie," she said, "you shall not go back to teach those horrid little savages."

"I do not intend to," said Addie; "I am going"—

"What are you going to do?" said her father.

Addie blushed like a rosebud, and ran out of the room. Her mother followed her, and they had a long talk about the young lawyer. I cannot tell you his name, for he lives in St. Paul's, is a friend of mine, and might not like to see himself so unceremoniously brought before the public. But in a week he was in the same place with Addie, boarding at a hotel not far from her father's house, and visiting them twice a day. And what was very strange, though, indeed, it always happens in love affairs that come to be published, the young lawyer was the son of an old friend of Mr. Carroll's. Everything was just as it ought to be.

Mrs. Carroll was delighted with her son-in-law. He was handsome, intelligent, and rich.

And Addie is very happy in her cottage that looks over the Mississippi.

You ask, what has become of her seven sisters?

I answer, I have nothing to do with them; I was writing about heroines.

CHAPTER XXV.

MORNING VISITING.

A MOMENT of retrospection.

How have I passed this day? what have I said? what have I done? what have I learned? These hours, that have their place in the eternal record, for, or against me, how have I employed them?

Let me recall them, while the minutes fly. Oh! "Time! wait yet another moment, and tell me something worth telling."

My day commenced at noon; before then, the dreadful items of housekeeping bound me down with a chain heavier and blacker than ever night fastened about the earth.

At noon, *a friend* called to see me; she had so longed for my society; for two months she had determined to find me out, but she had no time; who has any time in fashionable life? At last she had put her good intentions into execution; she had come to me.

She swept into the room, trained and hooped.

Her bonnet was from Paris, the mate to Eugenie's; her gloves were of the softest of rats' skins, and were imported from an establishment, compared with which, Alexander's and Bajon's were not. The express had brought her mantilla from Stewart's, only that morning; her laces and her gaiters were perfect.

She was so charmed to see me; she inquired after my little ones, but without permitting me to answer, she said that her darling Bijou had had a severe spell. The dear dog! she could not stay away from him long, so she pressed my hand, and left me. Five precious minutes she had lavished upon me; ought I not to be thankful?

The door bell! another friend. *Her* face was sorrowful. She said visiting was a horrid bore, it almost killed her, yet it was a duty; the world had its requirements. She showed me her visiting list and sighed; two hundred friends had claims upon her. She must go, or she would never get through the terrible round.

Again the door bell! another friend, another hoop, and another five minutes. *She* said it was necessary for one to keep a position in society; one must visit, or one will be forgotten.

"How are you all?" she continued; "what is the news? have you been to the House? think of Rachel's not coming to sing for us, after all! have

you heard Mr. Morley preach? has the new milliner made you a dress? have you read Maud? what do you give for turkeys? But, I hear the horses tramping; it reminds me that I am paying a dollar an hour, hack-hire; I *must* go. Oh! this dreadful morning visiting."

Again the door bell. Another friend! oh! no, a card; Mrs. Campbell, at home on Tuesday, from two to five.

The bell! do I want any oysters?

The bell! a beggar with a written demand for five dollars.

The bell! the gas bill.

The bell! ah! this time, it *is* a friend, and not a five minutes friend. No, indeed! a whole hour friend; one who is pretty and witty; one who loves me; one who hoards pleasant talk, that she may deal it out lavishly when we meet; one who is a little of a gossip, only a little; she cannot help it. She sees droll things, to which others are blind, and she tells them afterwards to me, only to me, and—a few others. But "*she is a woman, and she must speak.*" She shows me pebbles from beside the under-current of fashionable life, that she gathers for her own pastime; for, we women must not deny how pleasant to us all is a little gossip; and to some of us, it is like the unrolling of a precious manuscript to Wagner—"all heaven come down."

Sometimes, when we are together, we wander away to scenes that we have looked upon, so often, that they seem like pictures on our hearts; sometimes, we talk of what others have so well described. She goes with me, in fancy, to the caves of the west, to the fairy isles of the Mississippi. We seat ourselves by the lakes that dot the great prairie, and I tell her what the strange people who have, for ages, camped by these shores, have told me. Or, we walk over the beds of the moccasin flower, and hear, breaking the silence that is about us, the musical tones of the Laughing waters, calling us aside; we descend the path and pass the evergreens to look at her waves, dancing down the rocks and playing on the moss and stones; and I say, that just where we stand, so often some hunter has stood, and, aiming at the deer that stooped to drink in the crystal waters above, his arrow has flown through mist and foam to the heart, whose throbs it went to hush. And here, has many a maiden listened to the voice of love—has many a mother sung—has many a woman wept. And here, did Chequered Cloud, the last prophetess of the Dacotas who will ever recount her legends on this spot, sacred to devotion and romance—here, did she love to tell the traditions of her race, one of which, reader, I will repeat to you.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN EPISODE.

THERE is a legend that is often told by the red man's fireside; but say you that the red man has, in truth, no fireside? that he lives with thoughts of death and blood forever about his heart, knowing not the affections that cluster about home—a stranger to the ties and sympathies that soften the existence of the man who has heard the revealed will of God, and is thus gifted with a power of enjoyment that is his alone? You do not understand the goodness of God! The savage has his own peculiar happiness, clouded though it be by a thousand sins. Guided by the voice of conscience (too often deadened to insensibility), he is sometimes careful to follow its teachings, and the noble child of nature is true to the dictates of duty, and keenly alive to the sensibilities with which he has been endowed by a merciful Creator.

There is no amusement more cherished among savages than that of recounting the legends and tra-

ditions of their race. It is more than an amusement, for it is made the channel of warning and instruction—it keeps alive a love of country and a pride of race, a fear of the gods, a reverence for wisdom and old age. Thus are beguiled the long winter nights, when the house of buffalo skin totters with the angry blasts of the wind spirits, whose voices are heard from afar, appalling the tall pines that skirt the village, and ruffling the smooth branches of the evergreens that bear, through the long cold season, on their bosoms, their light burdens of glistening snow.

Then, while firelight gleams across the wigwam, lighting up the faces of the sleeping infant and its watching mother; while the pipe is passed from guest to guest with friendly hospitality; while the young, heeding the fierce breathing of the storm spirits without, creep closer to each other, drawing their blankets about their heads to shut out the fearful sound—then will the silence be broken by the voice of some venerable man, who relates to them events, the memory of which infuses again young blood into his chilled and swollen veins, bringing the flash that of old lightened his now dimmed eyes, nerving with steadiness the shrill and broken voice of age. Many a lesson of bravery and wisdom does he inculcate, as he tells them scenes that were written in the history of his heart, but which will be now cherished

by his sons and daughters, and thus transmitted, through them, to their children forever.

Or, it may be, the sweet breath of summer is playing about the rugged bluffs that guard the banks of the fair Minnesota. Shadows of the still evening are resting on the prairies, and the stars are bending their soft and quiet glances on the young maidens that have collected in some favorite spot, and on the beautiful flowers, that have found their way even to the mossy rocks, and are sleeping on their dangerous sides.

Nor are the young alone, listening to the holy voices of nature. The drooping chest, and the feeble step approach—many a warning precept rests on the tongue of the aged wise woman. She seats herself among them, and, for a while, turns from rock to river, and from the star-gemmed heavens to the sea of prairie that extends in immeasurable distance. Her thoughts are busy with the past; memories of the dead crowd around her soul's vision; she sees not the young faces that are collected round her; she hears not the soft and musical chant that is sung in perfect time, blending with the gentle waving of the wild rice, the tranquil breathing of the river, and all the sweet and harmonious "voices of the night."

"Tell us the story of the Star-Maidens, Harpstenah," said the Young Dove, placing her round

hand upon the bony arm of the old woman; "we will remember all your words, as you will so soon go to the city of spirits; it has been a long time since you have talked to us of the two maidens who went to live in the skies."

"It is easy to promise," said the old woman sternly, "but when did the young remember the words of the wise and aged? Look at my granddaughter; I bore her in my arms when she was young, though I was then old and feeble. I sang to her lullabies, though my heart was breaking; for her mother's spirit died away with the breath of winter; I closed her bright eyes, and laid her with the white snow in the branches of the trees. I taught my granddaughter to work moccasins, and to stain the sharp quills of the porcupine; day and night I worked for her. I said, when I am old, then will my child remember this; she will marry the brave man that I choose for her, she will take me to her warm lodge, she will feed me and guide me even as I did her, in her tender youth. So she promised me, but she has eaten her words; she will not marry the bravest warrior of his clan, who would bring plenty to her tee-pee, who would speak kind words to her old mother. She is ungrateful and obstinate; she will marry the cruel young man who drinks the white man's fire-water, and who hates me, because I give good advice to my daughter's child. He will

tell me to kill my own venison, and to keep away from his lodge. The Singing Bird has forgotten her promise; she is breaking the heart of her aged mother with sorrow, and drying up the blood in her veins."

The Singing Bird looked into her grandmother's face, then sadly drooped her beautiful eyes—two tears like pearls trembled on her eyelids, and rested for a moment on her soft cheek; but she made no reply, while the maiden who had first spoken turned to the wise woman again, and said, "Tell us, Harpstenah, the story of the Star-Maidens; the Singing Bird will listen, and grow wise; you will yet sit by the fire of her lodge, with the man you have chosen for her. I wish the Brave Heart had loved me; he is so tall and handsome that any maiden would love him, if her eyes were not blinded by some bad spirit."

"Your words are good," answered the old woman; "sometimes wise words fall from the lips of the young, but the Singing Bird is foolish and obstinate."

Ah! Harpstenah! you forget the days of your youth. When did Love sit lightly on the throne prepared for him? is he not ever prone to fly to a home of his own choosing? But listen! for Harpstenah speaks, while she raises her arm and points

with her long finger to two bright stars that are hovering over them.

"There they are; the two stars that are now the homes of the maidens who would not listen to the words of the old. My daughter! I will once more relate the legend, and it may be that the Great Spirit will put obedience in your heart, so that you may love me, and may weep by my body, when I go to the house of spirits—for I loved you, and watched over you when you were young and helpless."

Harpstenah looked towards the heavens. "Do you see them?" she said, while a multitude of young faces were upturned, following the direction of her gaze—"Do you see them? The large and restless one, and the small and steady one, near by? Spirits are ever abroad when those two stars shine out so brightly; they are around us now—in the waters, in the rocks, in the trees, in the flowers at our feet; but be not afraid, my children! They will not harm the young who are obedient to the words of the aged, though well may the maiden fear whose heart refuses to heed; the spirit of evil is about her, and he will bring sickness and trouble and death to her side." The Singing Bird tremblingly raised again her beautiful eyes to her grandmother's face, but they quickly drooped under that terrible look, and, as before, two tears rested on the soft, pale

cheeks, though the maiden spoke not. The wise woman resumed her seat, and drawing her blanket about her, bent her head on her bosom. The young girls did not disturb her meditations; but, at last, sighing deeply, in a quiet tone of voice, she commenced the favorite legend:

"Many, many winters ago, there came a young warrior among our people; he was proud and fearless; he wore the dress and spoke the language of the Dacotas, but he spoke other languages too, for when strangers came among us, it was noticed he could talk to them, whether they were enemies taken in battle, or friends come from afar, to eat of our venison, and to warm themselves by our fires.

"We could not get him to tell us whence he came; there were those among our people who said he talked to Wakun Tonka; that on dark and stormy nights he would pass from us, and stand on the high hills, listening to the mysterious words of the Father of Spirits; yet he never said how or why he came among us.

"We knew it was for good, for he led our young men to battle, and ever brought them home victorious. There were always fresh scalps in our villages; our enemies fell before us, so that we knew the gods had sent him. They called him the Wakun brave; even our oldest and proudest warriors were not ashamed to follow him to battle.

"Once, a terrible winter lingered with us. The snow drifted, and was piled against our lodges. Our good hunters toiled, but they could not keep their families from want; the snow fell again and again. Our braves went forth with their bows and arrows, but their hands were cold. They had no skill left: their arrows would not fly. They prayed to the Great Spirit, but He would not hear them, so they came to their lodges with sad faces, and when their children cried with hunger, they said, 'The Father of Spirits is angry with us; we must all die. The mallard and teal are gone to the warm South; the buffalo flee from our sight, and we cannot follow them. We will go, my children, to the city of spirits, where we will hunger and die no more.'

"Then did the Dacota mothers weep; for can a mother see the babe at her bosom starving, and not weep?

"There was stillness in the village that night. Our warriors knew they must die, so they wrapped themselves in their robes and laid them down, to wait until they should hear their names called, in the far-off land of souls.

"But where was the Wakun brave? That night he went forth alone, with his bow and arrow in his hand; the Dacotas thought that, like the buffalo, he wanted to die in the woods, where no eye could see the death struggle, so no one questioned him, or

said, Where goest thou? as he left the village, singing a song of triumph, even when our bravest men had said, 'There is nothing for us to do but to die.'

The long night passed; the stars were going out, and the clouds breaking away, when a merry shout and laugh were heard; our people lifted the doors of their tee-pees to see who could be so happy when the Great Spirit had forsaken His children, and they were to die from cold and hunger.

"Ha! the Wakun brave was bounding over the snow-drifted paths of the village, laughing and dragging by its branching horns a fat elk; every step he advanced, marks of its red blood followed him. 'Come out, young men and maidens,' he called; 'we are not to die. Let us leave this elk to the old women and little children, and we will go out and bring in the rest of the game that I shot with my Wakun bow and arrow.'

"The warriors came forth, and the maidens quickly followed them. The little children clapped their hands and shouted as the Wakun brave called again, 'Come on! come on!' The very sound of his voice brought strength and courage to the souls of our wearied ones. They went forth with bounding footsteps. Soon they came again with many a deer, with the tender wild pigeon, the mallard and the teal, the buffalo and bear. They ate, and their hearts grew strong; the women dried the buffalo

meat, and tanned the deer skin. They sang and danced, and wept no more.

"All this time, the Wakun brave had no wife. He was gay, and young, and handsome, but he said no words of love. What maiden but sighed when he passed her by, hoping still that he would follow her when she went apart from her companions, and say, 'Come to my lodge, and make it bright?' She hoped in vain; the heart of the Wakun brave was cold and hard as ice—he cared only for his bow and arrow. So feared the Dacota maidens, and they said they would think of him no more.

"There was then a great war chief who lived in the same village with the Wakun brave. He had a daughter, young, and good, and beautiful. She was not like a Dacota maiden, but was white and drooping, like the daughters of the pale faces, not one of whose hated race had ever, then, been seen among us. Her eyes were large and soft, and her lips red; there was always a smile resting on her face. Many of the young men had loved her, but she said, 'Leave me with my mother; I am not yet old enough to be a wife.'

"This great war chief said to the Wakun brave, 'The Great Spirit sent you among us; we love you, and honor your words, but you are not one of us until you choose a wife from our maidens, and thus show that you will remain with us. When a stranger

visits us, we tell him to take from among our daughters a wife, to work for him while he stays with us; this we do to show him honor. You have lived with us, have led us to battle, have saved all our lives; will you not take a wife to your lodge, and be to us as a brother?'

"The Wakun brave smiled. 'Give me your daughter,' he said; 'I love her, and will make her happy; call her, and see if she will go with me.'

"The war chief called his daughter. 'Will you be the wife of the Wakun brave?' he said. 'He loves you, and would take you to his lodge.'

"The face of the maiden lighted up. 'I knew,' she said, 'that it would be so, for a large bear came to me, in my dreams, and said the Wakun brave would one day take me to his lodge. I will be his wife, for has he not saved all our lives? The Dacota maiden will be proud to be the mother of his children, and to keep his lodge warm and clean.'

"So she became his wife, and was happy, too. The Wakun brave brought no other to his lodge, and he spoke no angry words. He killed the young deer, and brought it to her. After a while, a daughter was born to them, dark and bright-eyed, like her father, and soon another, white, and soft-eyed, like her mother; and when the braves would say, 'The

Great Spirit has sent you no son to follow you to battle,' the Wakun brave would reply, 'I am content; my daughters will be good and industrious, like their mother, and will, one day, make some brave men good wives.'

"This seemed strange to our warriors," continued Harpstenah, "for we know a Dacota wishes to have many sons; yet the Wakun brave was happy to have daughters only."

* * * * * *

"Will you go to your lodges and sleep, my children?" said Harpstenah; "the moon is rising, and if you say so, I will wait until another time to tell you what befell the Wakun brave and his beautiful wife."

"Go on, go on," said the Young Dove. "Go on, go on, good Harpstenah," said they all—all save the Singing Bird, who only looked into her grandmother's face sadly, without speaking.

"Enah! my children," said Harpstenah, "the Wakun brave and his beautiful wife were very happy, but although the Great Spirit loves his children, He often lets sorrow fall upon them. One evening, when the first cold was coming, and the women were gathering wild rice and cranberries, the Wakun brave lay in his tee-pee, his two little daughters playing about him, when their mother entered the lodge; on her back was a heavy sack of

cranberries. Without looking up, she unfastened the strap from her head, and threw her burden aside; then, sighing heavily, she came by the fire, and sat close to her husband on the buffalo robe where he was lying.

"Her face was pale—pale. Deep shadows lay under her soft eyes, and the red hue of the strawberry had gone from her lips; her husband started and sat upright when he saw her.

"'What is the matter, my wife?' he said. 'Have you seen Unk-ta-he, the dread Water-god?'

"'No, my husband,' she said, again sighing deeply, 'but I have seen Death, and a glance of his eye has fallen upon me, and now I must go away with him, and be his bride. I must leave you and my little girls, alone in the lodge where we have been so happy.'

"'You are sick,' said her husband; 'but you will not die. I will go for our medicine-men, and they will charm away this glance of the evil eye. Weep not, my young wife; we will be happy again.'

"'Yes, we will be happy,' she said, 'for though I know I must leave you, it will not be very soon; while I can stay with you and my little children, and my old mother, I will be happy even if I suffer pain, but the medicine-men cannot cure me.'

"The Wakun brave said kind words to her, and

her hands got warm, and the color came back to her cheek. She slept a long time, and all thought she would be well again—all but her grandmother, for she was a medicine-woman, and she knew that when the glance of an evil spirit had fallen upon the young, it was in vain to try to charm it away with the sacred medicine and the gourd; but she said nothing to the Wakun brave, who loved his wife, and who was angry if any one spoke to him of death.

"All through the cold winter they watched her; they made her soup of venison to bring back her strength. The medicine-men would shut out every one from the lodge, and try to charm away the large worm that they said had found its way to her warm breast, and was gnawing at her heart.

"The Wakun brave went forth with his bow and arrows, and killed the pheasant. He would say, 'Eat, eat, my wife, and grow strong again.'

"Once he looked at her and said, 'The ice is breaking away in the spirit lakes, and a few blue flowers are creeping up through the wet snow to catch the warm breath that comes from the sun; the cold winds and frosts are going, and the wife of the Wakun brave will be well when summer comes again.'

"She answered, 'I am only waiting for the first

flowers, that I may know it is time for me to go to the land of souls.'

"The Wakun brave wept. Had any other warrior wept, he would have been despised, for tears are only for women; but who could despise the Wakun brave, whose head was adorned with feathers of honor; whose arms were red with the life-blood of the enemies of our people?

"That night the two little girls laid down near their mother and fell asleep; the grandmother fastened down the door of the tee-pee, to keep out the damp winds, and the Wakun brave sat by the fire near his sick wife. Her eyes shone like the eyes of the deer when the hunter aims his arrow at her heart. Her breath came quick and hard; her bosom heaved, as she lay panting on the buffalo robe. The Wakun brave sighed, for he knew now that she was going from him, that she was even then setting forth on her journey to the world of spirits. She spoke no more, but looked awhile at the two little sleeping maidens, then turned her eyes upon her husband. A long time she gazed upon him, while the brightness faded from her soft eyes; and not until the Wakun brave had placed his hand over her young heart and found it still—did he know that the wife whom he loved was a silent wanderer on the road that leads to the world of souls.

"Then her grandmother took some water and bathed her white face, and called upon the young maidens to plait her long hair, and to dress her in her richest robes. They put the bridal crown of eagle's feathers upon her head, and heaped their best ornaments, as presents, on her feet, while the Wakun brave took from its place his bow and arrows, and left the lodge.

"It was a long time before he returned. The Dacotas thought he had gone to join his wife, or else to live with Unk-ta-he again; but he came back and asked for his daughters, and said he should live with them; yet he never talked of his wife, who lay in the branches of the tall trees, wrapped in the embroidered skin of the white deer, with her face turned towards the rising sun.

"Many winters passed away, and still the two maidens lived in the lodge with their father. Always rich presents lay at the door, and night after night the young warriors played on the flute, but the maidens never came forth, though their grandmother shamed them that they were not long ago wives, with their young sons and daughters around them. Their father would say, 'Why do you not marry, my daughters? If you want to live together, you can marry the Black Bear, who has offered to buy you both. Marry him then, or some brave man,

that I may see you happy in your tee-pees before I die.'

"'My father,' said the dark-faced girl, 'we will not leave you; who would cook for you and make your moccasins? You have no wife, either, to cut your wood and bring it to you; we are happy with you and our grandmother, and so we will not choose a husband.'

"'Besides, my father,' said the younger maiden, 'the Dacota braves, when they get angry, strike their wives and speak terrible words to them, and this would make my heart die. So I and my sister will stay with you, and not choose a husband.'

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"One summer evening," continued Harpstenah, after a pause, "the father and the maidens sat outside the door of the lodge, looking at all the wonderful things the Great Spirit had made; the skies, the river, the mountains, and the hill under which the river-gods passed. The grandmother sat on a robe within, for she had now seen a hundred winters, and the night air made her limbs ache. The young warriors came near the tee-pee, laying on the grass and boasting of their strength, and of the scalps they had taken, for they hoped the two sisters would bend their ears to hear, and thus learn to love them; but the maidens talked apart together, and did not notice them; so, one by one the warriors arose and folded

their robes across their bosoms, and the father and daughters were left together.

"'My daughters,' said the Wakun brave, 'listen to my words; they are good. I am an old man. I have not seen as many winters as half our wise men, but I grew old when your mother died. I had stood across my enemy's body and seen the life-blood flow, drenching the ground. I had torn the reeking scalp from his head, and holding it high in my hand, shouted aloud the death-cry. I had murdered the wife and children of the man I hated, and I gloried in death; my soul grew hot with the life I had taken. But when the evil-eye glanced upon your mother, when the blood dried in her veins and oozed from her lips—when she said, "I go to the land of souls," then many winters passed over my soul. And now, my children, I die: I hasten to join the company of warrior spirits who dance to the Giant on the green prairies of the Great Spirit. Who will care for my daughters when I am gone? let them be wise and hear their father's words. Let them choose a brave warrior for a husband, and be happy with him in his lodge.'

"The younger maiden said, 'I will do as my sister says; if she will marry the Bounding Elk, I will go to the lodge of the Branching Tree, and we will be good and happy wives.'

"'I tell you what we will do, my father,' said the

tall maiden; 'we will marry the two stars that are bending over us. I will marry the large bright one, and my sister will marry the small one that is near.'

"'Cease! foolish maiden!' said their grandmother; 'the spirits of the stars will hear you; obey your father's words, and go to the lodges of your husbands, and, like the women of your race, be proud to bring up sons to fight against their father's enemies.'

"The Wakun brave wrapped himself in his robe, and slept by the door, and the grandmother called the Dacota girls in. 'You must not sleep outside the lodge,' she said; 'do you want some wandering fiery man to carry you off to his distant home?'

"'Do not fear,' said the tall maiden; 'the stars, our husbands, will watch over us while we sleep; they love us too well to let the fiery men do us any harm.'

"'Your words are foolish,' said the old woman, 'but you will not obey your father, nor listen to what I say. The Great Spirit will not care for you; some trouble will come upon you, because you are disobedient and obstinate.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN EPISODE.

"THE night wore on; the blue heavens were full of stars, as they are to-night," continued Harpstenah. "The distant cry of the wolves was heard as they howled for the buried bodies of our enemies. For there had been a great battle, and the Chippeways were pursued by our people, so that they could not carry off their dead, and our women cut them in pieces, and buried them. The big fish leaped in the water, yet the village was quiet as a new-born babe on its mother's breast.

"The grandmother slept within the lodge, and the Wakun brave by the door, while the two maidens lay together under the shining stars. The night wore on, and there was no sound to break its silence until the voice of the Wakun brave was heard, calling upon his daughters.

"'Come back, oh, come back! come,' the Wakun brave said. The Dacotas roused them from their sleep to find out the cause of the warrior's grief.

There he stood, his arms stretched forth towards the heavens, his eyes fixed on the two stars; while away, away! the maidens were going through the air, their forms growing smaller and smaller every moment.

"There were many Dacotas standing with the Wakun brave, and they called to the maidens by their names. Their old grandmother tore her hair and wrung her hands, but in vain. The maidens were soon a mere speck to those who were straining their eyes to see them, and then there was a bright flashing about the stars, and they were seen no more.

"Then did the Wakun brave tell his friends that, as he slept, he heard a noise near him, and he awakened. There was a strange light about his daughters' forms, as they were suddenly lifted up, and borne away from him. He called, and tried to reach them, yet they were quickly far away.

"'Bury me, my friends,' said the Wakun brave, 'here, where they slept; then will they ever look down on my grave! for I must join the spirits of my forefathers, and shout with them loud cries of triumph in the land of souls.'

"On the robe, within the door, lay the old grandmother. She was gone where there were no more tears. In the morning they laid the dead warrior and the dead woman side by side, in the lodge.

"When they came to bury the Wakun brave, by night, there was a great storm. The thunder birds

arose and clapped their wings, and the water-gods were angry at the sound; they heaved their mighty breasts. The black clouds parted, and the big rain drops fell, and with them fell tears from the skies; the sisters were weeping for their father in their distant home. They were now the wives of the star-spirits. They wept that they had refused the counsel of their father and their aged grandmother; now were they punished—shut up in the bright but cold and silent region of the stars forever."

The Dacota maidens wept as Harpstenah finished. The Singing Bird again looked in her grandmother's face; two tears rested on her young cheek, but she said nothing.

"My children," said Harpstenah, "you must all go to sleep. The prairies are covered with red strawberries, and, before the sun is up, you must be gathering them for the wives of the pale faces. The Dacotas are no longer stronger than their enemies. We must give up our lands and our homes, and travel towards the setting sun, when the white man bids us. We will need food and clothing, for we have no Wakun brave to bring plenty to our lodge when the winter's cold comes upon us. We must take to the pale faces the things they want, and get from them what will buy us food and clothing."

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"Grandmother," said the Singing Bird, as they

stood in their lodge, ere laying down to sleep, "will you lend me your sharp axe, that you bought from the trader?"

"For what?" said her grandmother.

Once more the Singing Bird raised her beautiful eyes, but there were no tears resting on her soft cheeks; a crimson glow was there as she said—

"I will no longer be obstinate. I will marry the man you have chosen for me. I will go out and cut down the young trees for our lodge. I will love you and care for you, as you did for me when I was young, and we will be happy together."

"The Great Spirit is good to me," said the aged Harpstenah. "My daughter! I will sit by the fire in your lodge, and teach your children many wise things. No evil spirit will cast a spell upon you, now that your heart has listened to my words. I loved you, and worked for you when want and trouble were pressing upon me, but now have you made my heart glad, and my old eyes will weep no more."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A RAINY DAY.

It is night, again—night, dreary and rainy. The little ones are all safe; it may be, they are dreaming of the babes in the wood, whose history lulled them to sleep. The singer's head is nodding over her clasped hands; she has a right to her nap, if ever nurse earned her wages. Three times I have awakened her, that she might go to her room. She opens her eyes, looks up drowsily at me, and closes them again. I will not disturb her, for I am established in my arm-chair, my feet on the ottoman. I ought to be happy; but, like Lot's wife, I cannot help looking back. The cares of this life, the little every-day troubles, that should be as Sodom and Gomorrah, oppress me.

And to-day everything has gone wrong. From my bed this morning, I went to my window. I had dreamed that a rose-tree, whose branches I was coaxing to climb about the lattice-work, was in full bloom. Half-awake, I rubbed my eyes that I might

see distinctly to count the blossoms. Alas! the storm had broken off the branches, and they, with their roses, were strewed about, a wreck of what was so pretty yesterday. I was lamenting all the time that I was dressing, for in the city any green thing that will live and grow about me, I learn to love.

In the breakfast-room, I found the family assembled; *rainy day* was written on every face. The children hung about; there was to be no climbing of the old apple-tree, no weeding the little garden, no pleasant afternoon in the Capitol grounds. Their elders had been watching the clouds, and saw no signs of a clearing up. Yet verses of Scripture fell sweetly on our ears, and the morning prayer was offered to strengthen us for the duties of the day. Then breakfast, and then, the scattering of the gentlemen to their offices. And then, the burden of housekeeping. How heavily it fell upon me! like those black clouds that I saw when I looked out from the kitchen window. And beside this window, on the table, were the ripe cherries and all the other materials for a cherry-pudding.

I wish it were a reverie, the memory of that cherry-pudding! for if I went nearer to that large mirror that hangs between the windows, I should see the blush that I *feel* crimsoning my face.

Last night, we lingered in the moonlight, some

friends and I; the night was fair, too fair to sleep away. From the balcony, we watched the passing clouds, and saw the moon arise. Less frequently came the passers-by. The quiet wooed to conversation. Our theme was men—and women—how they lived, and died, and were forgotten.

"Not forgotten," said one; "there are men for whom death is a passport to veneration, and an undying human sympathy. Time is the great leveller; he puts men where they ought to be. One in life is too little valued—another too much; Time assigns each his proper place. And so with books. It is not the decree of the multitude, that babbles of its own opinions, that applauds or condemns, as the sentiments of a book agree or clash with its own. It is the calm approval of posterity that is to be desired. *That* is fame for which man may toil."

"And woman"—I said.

"Woman!" he interrupted me. "What has woman to do with fame? Bah! let her nurse her children; let her dust the house, make puddings."

"She may do all this," I said; "but this being done, may she not write books?"

"No!" he yelled out, in a voice loud enough to awake our farthest neighbor, or the dead. "No woman ever made a good pudding that wrote a book. That is as certain as that we shall not see yonder moon, to-morrow, at noonday."

"Miss Leslie," I suggested, "and Mrs. Childs."

"They wrote receipts," he answered, gruffly. "I should not like to eat one of their puddings."

"Tennyson," I said, "favors the rights of woman."

"Tennyson is a fool!" he growled out. "Some woman was at his elbow when he wrote that 'Princess.' Whenever a wise man plays the fool, a woman is at the bottom of it."

He got up to go. We all arose, though the moon still shone gloriously. I caught from one of her beams an idea.

"Come to me, all of you," I said, "to-morrow. I will disprove what he says. He is a woman-hater. He shall eat of my pudding, and take back what he says."

"Never!" he said, with a raven's laugh. But the rest smiled, and all promised to come. I was left alone on the balcony.

It was pleasant to be there, and look on that beautiful night; to be there alone. Yet the thought of that woman-hater came up, and marred the beauty of the heavens. I took "In Memorium" from the marble table, and thought to read it by the moonlight. But I was offended, and could not compose my mind. I threw down the book, and drew in the shutters. "I never will," I murmured, as if addressing those flying clouds—"I never will allow myself to be inferior to such as he. *Different*, I may be—I

hope I am; but inferior, never." I slammed down the window, and left the room. "According to him" (as I slowly went up the steps), "I am condemned to babies, dust, and puddings forever."

Very cautiously I opened the door of my chamber, lest I should wake the sleepers. I threw myself in the old chair, and felt at home. I was myself again. How comfortable it was! I glanced into the nursery by the door; all was, as it should be, there.

My eye swept over my own room. Here am I queen, I thought, but my domains are neither rich nor extended. A room twenty feet square. An ingrain carpet, very grave colored. Painted pine furniture! A yankee clock, and three pictures over the mantle-piece, two commemorative of woman's endurance and unselfish devotion; the third, the prisoner of Chillon. A mirror, over which were hung faded rose-buds; they were blooming when my mother placed them there. *On* the table were some twenty books. *Underneath* the table was a huge basket of undarned stockings and pantaloons that wanted new knees. I looked kindly at the books; they were friends that never failed me. Coldly I regarded the basket. It was my enemy, forever telling me what I ought to do.

I went to bed. To-morrow there was work for me. I was to prove that a literary life did not

unfit a woman for domestic duties. Did I succeed, I might write books. Did I fail—babies, dust, and puddings! The last thing, I looked out to see how, in so short a time, the morn had become obscured. Clouds were gathering as I drew down the painted window shade. Fatal augury! I awoke to see the rainy day.

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How much depended upon a cherry pudding. A solemn consciousness of this oppressed me, as I surveyed the preparations, in course of which Miss Leslie (I mean her cookery book) was laid upon the table.

Biddy was beating the eggs. How will it turn out? I soliloquized—the pudding! will it be light? will it be good? The cherries, how red they are, how juicy! the eggs, so fresh. The milk, already the cream is gathering. The sifted flour looks like fallen snow. The butter is yellow as the cowslip. The sugar, weighed and powdered—the grated nutmeg—the mace—the pint of wine, for the sauce. Oh! it *must* be good! I shall triumph over the woman hater; he will bow to me, beg my pardon, and tell me to write more books, and I will be magnanimous, and forgive him his thousand sneers. I mixed the flour and milk and frothing eggs. It was all yellow as gamboge. I stirred it carefully with a long iron spoon. There was not a lump to

be seen. I poured it into the bag, made of cotton cloth white and new. I plunged it, standing at arm's length, in the boiling water, that for a moment stopped its bubbling, and then, went at it harder than ever. The pudding danced about. Biddy stood by the range, regarding it with interest.

"Biddy," said I, "the dignity of your sex depends upon the fate of that pudding. If you value your honor, let nothing happen to it."

"Never fear," said she, with a confident air, "it will do well. It will be good, I'll engage. In my father's, in Ireland, we had cherry puddings every day in the year, made of cherries, fresh pulled off our own trees."

"We've no such trees in our own country," I said.

"I'll engage not," said Biddy, wiping her face with her apron. "Americky aint the old country."

"Our trees," said I, "Biddy! only bear once a year, in the summer; and it is but for a short time that we can make cherry puddings. So do not let this burn up."

"I'll burn up myself first," said she, with energy.

I thought I could trust her to watch it, so I went to a near room, and picking up a book, threw myself on the lounge. Cooking is fatiguing I thought, but the pudding will repay me for my trouble. I arranged the pillows under my head, and opened

Nile Notes; turning over the leaves until I came to the chapter describing the tombs of the kings and queens of Egypt. I like to wander among the tombs.

I never read carelessly anything about death; there was always a *terrible* fascination in the subject; it suggests thought. Even the death of an animal affects me.

I was soon lost in thought, after reading of the splendor of the sepulchres of the Egyptian kings; of the unpretending appearance of those of the queens. They were not buried together, those husbands and wives of Egypt. This will suit the woman hater. He should have lived in those days; his idea of the great inequality of the sexes, would interfere with a wife's privilege of mouldering away by the side of her husband. So thought the kings of Egypt, and now, we women of a later age, turn away in laughter, or in disgust, from the poor miserable men mummies that are unfolded for inspection. Better have been laid in the earth to fulfil the sentence, "dust to dust." Better have acknowledged the relationship with the worm.

As it is, the sepulchres of the queens are the more pleasant to contemplate. There was less pretension, and so the contrast, with the utter desolation, is less.

How they have mouldered away! eyes and hearts and rags together. To get up to the tombs, one must wade through rags that once were winding

sheets, or kick them up, as children do the dead leaves, in the woods.

So I wandered among the tombs, and the dead came out. There stood Cleopatra! I dreamed over her history, and in the recalling of the *splendid* sins of her life half an hour passed.

Longer perhaps; but, of a sudden, I started from that lounge. Those children up stairs! were they pulling down the chandeliers, and taking up the carpets? It was a rainy day.

I went up to bargain with them for peace. A sponge cake was to be the reward of their compliance with my terms. They were not in the nursery; there had been disputes, and a rebellion. Only the nurse and baby remained to watch, at the window, the falling rain. I traced the rebels to my room, of which they had taken possession. One was standing on his head, on my rosewood writing-desk. The others were building a house with my books. The foundations were of Shakspeare and Webster's Dictionary. The walls were of Blackwood and the Quarterly Review. The Opium Eater and his books served for the roof, while a French play book and an old worn copy of Sartor Resartus made the chimney. What could I, should I do?

I showed the sponge cake, proposing terms of submission. The rebels, stumbling over the ruins of their falling temple, returned to the nursery.

Each was in danger of choking in another moment, from a large mouthful, and a promise of obedience to the laws for the future. I picked up my books, and descended to inquire after my pudding.

I had reached the landing on the next floor, when a strange gurgling sound met my ear. I flew back to the nursery; all was well. Returning, I heard again the horrid noise. What could it be? Perhaps the rain-water from the spout on the porch. I went out to look. It was flowing gently with a dripping noise, while louder and louder sounded something else, as if five hundred bottles were being held upside down, for their contents to escape. What could it be? it almost stunned me. Oh! Nemesis! the pudding!

I leaped down the steps, three at a time—dashed through the blind door that divides the hall, and threw open the kitchen door. Oh! death to literature and woman's rights! confusion to Horace Greeley forever—it *was* the pudding!

There it was—or, there were its remains, bubbling, gurgling, and bursting forth from the upper half of the burnt bag. Through the steamy smoke arising, I saw the corners of the cotton and the drenched tape. The last of the gamboge liquid was pouring, out of the remnants of the bag that Biddy had suspended by a long two-pronged fork, while she looked at me in desperate distraction. I saw

her lips move, but could hear nothing save the awful commotion going on in that iron pot. I sunk into the nearest chair. Oh! agony! the woman-hater!

The awful din of the strife was fading away. The last drops were oozing from the scorched cotton. It was all boiling together; cherries, and milk, and eggs, and a yard of burned cotton, with a gallon of water. What a mess wherewith to assert the dignity of woman! What a sample of my domestic abilities to offer to the woman-hater! What a specimen of the housekeeping of a literary woman!

There was silence. It was all over. Biddy laid her fork down, after tossing into a pan the remains of the pudding bag. She looked at me with set teeth; stooping over the boiling water had made her very red in the face. I waited for her to speak, wishing in my soul that she were in Ireland, on the topmost bough of her ever-bearing cherry trees.

She spoke—"Faix! an' I never see anything burn so quick as that."

I looked at her—I burst into tears. I could no more; but feeling faint, I went into the air. Recovering, I rushed up stairs to my room, locked my door, and threw myself on the bed. I could have laughed my life away, but for the thought of the woman-hater. He was right; and I will make no more books—I should say puddings—forever.

I shuddered at the thought of meeting him at dinner. Shall he triumph over me at my own table? Never! let me die first, and be buried with the queens of Egypt, or even among the kings.

I was taken ill. At twelve o'clock the woman hater found on his table a note. It apprised him of my sudden indisposition; a cold from the change in the weather.

This evening, I received one from him. It ran thus:—

"I hope your cold is better. I shall not see you again until I return from Sevastopol. I leave in the morning.

"P. S. We are old friends. Were you really ill, or did your pudding burn? Farewell."

May he stay in Sevastopol forever!

But I will sit here and think of people that I know; I may say what I choose of them to myself. Who hears me if I think aloud? The world is asleep.

You may abuse the world, and philosophize on the objections to intercourse with it—and on the evils of city life. I love a city life, and none other, for I love my race. Cowper and I would never have agreed had we discussed this question. And yet I loved *him* from a child, for his history of the three hares.

My friends come to me and tell me what the

world says and does; they meet in my little parlor, and make the hours there most happy. Unwillingly I witness their departure, and then I am alone to dream of what they said and how they looked.

To-night I have been self-imprisoned for fear of the woman-hater, and the evening has been rainy; the children have been playing noisy games; they have broken two tumblers and a large pitcher, but I do not complain. There is no broken head.

I am encouraged, for it is clearing up. I see the stars. I will dream of my friends *before* I sleep.

"YOU HAVE TOO MUCH RESPECT UPON THE WORLD;
THEY LOSE IT, THAT DO BUY IT WITH MUCH CARE."

CHAPTER XXIX.

MOTHER AND CHILD.

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

It has not been long since a gentleman that I shall call Mason, was frequently seen in the fashionable circles of New York society; he was constantly attended by his son. The two attracted much attention; the father, by his handsome figure and courteous manners, and by a haughtiness of bearing that was softened by a certain sadness of demeanor and countenance; the son, by remarkable regularity of features, grace of person, and delicacy of appearance; a voice so agreeable as to arrest every listener, and a tone of conversation that showed how improved and refined a mind was encased in a frame so slight. Added to all this was the reputation of wealth, that, so frequently, is erroneously attached to those who come from the South. It is not surprising, then,

that father and son were received with smiles by beautiful daughters and calculating mothers, when together they visited the crowded scenes of resort during the gay season.

Mr. Mason had been a planter in Alabama; his residence was not distant from a large town on the sea-coast. There Arthur was born and reared with the utmost care. An excellent tutor had charge of his education, while both parents encouraged him in his pursuits. The extreme delicacy of his health induced his father to leave Alabama, always, in May, with his family, for New England and its bracing climate, where they remained until the hazy clouds of Autumn veiled the sun, and the vines that clung to the old trees crimsoned at the advent of the Indian Summer. Even then Arthur would earnestly petition to stay a little longer, declaring there were no such crimson and yellow woods in Alabama as these through which he rambled.

There is poetry in many a child's soul that dies out for want of nursing; but this was not the case with Arthur Mason. His father was a scholar, and his mother, though far from being learned, had a fine mind, and was well-informed. From her eye, her child's caught a glow that brightened with intelligence, as he gazed on the hills clothed in the gorgeous tints of Autumn. The changing clouds hanging over them; the impetuous streams dancing by

the rocks and bushes; the bright hues of the chestnut and butternut trees contrasted with the old pines and evergreens; in each of these objects Arthur saw traces of God's glory. His eyes rested on the beautiful, and his thoughts ascended to the Creator.

Mrs. Mason's devotional spirit had descended to her son. She told him, while in early childhood he rested in her arms, of the poets of the Bible, and how they saw God in every towering hill, and in each flower by the way-side. She tried to describe to him "the beginning," when God created the heavens and the earth; how chaos itself was forced to exist, and from it sprang the earth, a cradle, and, alas! a grave for man. She pictured to his mind the swaying waters, and the gleaming light; and the silence that reigned over them, disturbed by no sound save the awful breathings of the Almighty. She told of the division of the waters above from those under the firmament; of the coming forth of the dry land from beneath the waves, lashing, as they retired; of the springing up of the grass, the herb, the forest, and the fruit tree; of the lights that shone, at God's command, in the blue heavens; of the creation of the great whale, the smaller fishes, and the winged fowl, and of all the animals on the face of the earth. And when all was ready for man, when God in his own time, however we may desig-

nate it, had prepared for man a habitation, he created him of the small particles of the dust of the earth, and brought him to his home. Then he provided for him a companion, in the person of Eve.

She would relate to him the history of man; his first happiness, his fall from holiness, his banishment from Eden. She would tell of the deluge, the tower of Babel, the dispersion of the human race, Sinai and its terrors; of all the interesting incidents we find in Scripture. These themes were discussed by the mother and child in the morning walk, or as the time of rest approached. They often talked of Jesus, of the Millennium, of Heaven, and of Hell.

The boy loved to hear of the poets of the Bible, of the beautiful lives that they led; how fearless they were, doing God's will, how their souls were like "meteors kindled at the eye of the Almighty." How Moses lived with God and God's works, desiring no other society, and how at the last, God himself buried him. Often Arthur asked of Joshua, who commanded the sun and moon to stand still, and his mother showed him that here faith triumphed over the laws of science. For what science could arrest the going of the sun and moon? but Joshua did so by his confidence in God!

They talked, too, of the godless poet, and how dreadful it was when genius stood up, like an armed man, to contend with God; of David and the beau-

tiful songs he sang, playing upon the harp. Arthur, when a little fellow, repeated, by heart, a number of these songs, and his mother often read to him the twenty-second, telling him that some writers said that Christ had chanted the whole of this psalm when hanging on the cross. She talked to him of Solomon, of the beauty and holiness of his youth, and of the tremendous sins of his later years. Of Isaiah, that splendid poet and prophet, who, tradition says, was sawn asunder by his enemies. Of Jeremiah, who, like Christ, wept over Jerusalem, and who perished a martyr in Egypt. Of Ezekiel, whose verses are so startling and strange, and who died young. Of Daniel, the dreamer, and of Jonah, who sang that noble song on the sea-shore. Of Hosea, the patriot, and Amos, the herdsman. Of Joel, who told of the last day, and of Micah, who prophesied the time when "they shall learn war no more." Of all the Old Testament poets, Arthur and his mother often talked.

And there was time to dwell on the poets of the New Testament; Alfred could repeat many of the beautiful sayings of Christ, and of John, and James, and Paul. He lingered always on the history of Peter, who was so bold and impetuous, but so affectionate; for even when he came to be an old man, he never heard the cock crow but tears streamed from his eyes; and his bosom heaved with repentant

emotion when he remembered how he denied Christ. These thoughts were familiar ones to Arthur, who, as he became older, and read the verses of other poets, would compare their works and their lives with those of his old friends of the Bible, whose history his mother's voice had made so charming to his ear.

Thus Arthur approached manhood; but his extreme delicacy of health made it evident to his parents that he was unfitted for any profession or occupation that would secure to him a maintenance. This gave them no care beyond the anxiety and grief that they felt at his occasional attacks of illness, and the prostration of strength that followed. An only child, he would inherit an ample fortune. They tried to make him good and happy, and in this, for many years, they seemed to have succeeded. Though his health was so delicate, his figure was sufficiently large, but not robust; his countenance was radiant with intelligence and animation; his days passed smoothly along, varied with many an agreeable employment. He was his mother's assistant in all her efforts for the improvement of the poor around her, and for the welfare of her servants. Much of his time was passed with his father in the library, the shelves of which were stored with good books. Calmly and happily the time passed, until he had attained his twenty-third year.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHANGE.

Is there no constancy in earthly things?
No happiness in us, but what must alter?
No life, without the heavy load of fortune?

It was late in October. A severe fever had been prevailing on the southern coast, and although it was considered safe for those who had protracted, on this account, their visit to the North, to return home, yet there were scattering cases that proved severe, and sometimes fatal. Mrs. Mason, on arriving at her house, was in perfect health, and, with an energy that was an admirable element of her character, she set to work to administer comforts to those in her neighborhood who were still invalids. Her kind heart sorrowed, most of all, for the old servants who received her with so much affection, and who trusted to her skill to renew the strength that fever had wasted away. It was while anxious for the welfare of others, that symptoms of the fever were exhibited

in her own person. Possessing a vigorous constitution, her friends, for the first few days, were not alarmed; but a sudden change for the worse aroused their fears, and before they were really conscious of her danger, she was dead. The shock was overpowering to her husband and son, and the lamentations of the servants were heard all over the plantation. Many of her friends assembled at the first tidings of her danger, and they vainly endeavored to reconcile her husband to the will of God. He seemed possessed of a horror at the thought of death and the grave when associated with her, and refusing to look upon her after death, never entered the room in which she expired. But not so with Arthur. He acknowledged the right of the Creator to dispense joy or grief according to his will. Not entirely submissive in the first hour of passionate sorrow—when reason and reflection, guided by religion, came to his aid, he bowed beneath the hand that smote him, and tried to bring to his father's mind the promises of faith to sustain him in this dark hour.

Notwithstanding the kindness and solicitude of friends, and the devotion of his son, Mr. Mason's health failed under the morbid indulgence of his grief. He rarely opened a book, and refused to attend to any business affairs, passing his time in walking about the house and grounds, and moodily dwelling on the past. His agent, a crafty, dishonest

man, took advantage of his indifference, and Arthur perceived that his father's interests were suffering from neglect. Unused, as he was, to business details, he determined to apply himself closely to the consideration of his father's concerns, and, if necessary, to give up the agent, and himself supply his place. But the increasing despondency and illness of his only parent so alarmed him that he suddenly determined to take the advice of their medical attendant, and go to New York, where change of scene might accomplish much towards a recovery. Mr. Mason expressed surprise at his son's wish to leave Alabama, but readily consented, and showed some interest in the preparations that were immediately commenced for their journey.

One circumstance I have not mentioned; it was Arthur's attachment to a young lady who had always lived near him. This attachment had commenced when they were mere children, and had grown with their growth. Ada's father died when she was quite young, and Mrs. Morton was occupied with the management of the affairs connected with her estate. Thus, Ada, who was a most engaging child, was left much to herself, and passed a great deal of her time with Arthur and his mother. She became dear as a daughter to Mrs. Mason, who looked forward to seeing her stand in such a relation to her. But Mrs. Morton was a calculating woman, and

when Ada and Arthur were no longer children, their intimacy gave her no little uneasiness. She knew Mr. Mason to be a careless, extravagant person, and Arthur's state of health was a serious objection. Yet, after he had attained his twentieth year, his health had improved so much that it could no longer be urged as an objection, and influenced by her daughter's petitions, she consented to the engagement. The marriage was to have taken place during the winter that followed Mrs. Mason's death, but that event Mrs. Morton seized upon as an excuse for delay. Mr. Mason's illness took up much of his son's time, and Ada saw, with anxiety, her mother resuming her old expressions of dissatisfaction, though she concealed, until she was ready to act, her determination ultimately to prevent the marriage.

It was on the evening before the day appointed for the departure to New York. Arthur was sitting in the library, listening to his father's restless walking through the long hall. It was just a year from the time of his mother's death, and during that period he had been his father's constant and devoted attendant. His own health had never been so good. Were it not for the delicate mould of his features, and his complexion, one could have hardly thought of him as ever having been an invalid.

He had been looking over some papers left for

him by the agent, and had concluded that it was impossible for him, at present, to make any change in the person who should manage the property during their absence. The agent made many assurances of devotion to his father's interests. These Arthur doubted; but he trusted all to the man, from necessity. The servants had been commended to the kindness of a friend, who promised to see that the overseer acted up to the considerate instructions that their master had given him. There seemed nothing more to do, and Arthur's thoughts disengaged, turned at once to Ada, from whom he had parted that afternoon. He dwelt on their long attachment, on the affectionate intercourse that had, at first, united them as brother and sister; then he recalled the time when that calm stream of feeling became a torrent, when he felt there was a tie yet stronger than the one uniting sister and brother. He remembered when he told this to Ada, and how ingenuously she acknowledged that he occupied the highest place in her affections. With all these pleasant thoughts his mother was associated, and now her presence seemed to be about him, as he looked from the window to her grave, over which the moonlight was streaming. This reminded him that he was leaving scenes so endeared to him, and the deepening color in his cheek showed how intense

were his emotions. He passed his hand across his brow and sighed heavily, as again the sound of his father's footsteps recalled him to his greatest care. He determined to join him, when the door opened, and the old house-servant announced Mrs. Morton.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MONEY AND THE HEART.

"Dumb jewels often, in their silent kind,
More than quick words, do move a woman's mind."

MRS. MORTON was a stately lady, and her disposition could be read in the flashing of her black eyes, that had no expression of softness, intimating the yielding nature usually attributed to woman. She loved money inordinately, and was thus a victim to a passion that changes the very nature of woman; this grasping tendency increased every day. She had naturally a violent temper, but rarely permitted herself to show any emotion, so under her control were her feelings and sentiments. Rumor declared that Mr. Morton had not been happy in his marriage, and reports of Mrs. Morton's penurious dealings with tradespeople, and exacting course towards her servants, made her rather unpopular among her acquaintances. Yet she aimed at pleasing generally, and her manners were conciliatory.

She could flatter when she had an object to gain. Devoted to fine dress, a great part of her time was passed in the study of the art of adorning. On the occasion of her visit to Arthur, she swept into the room arrayed with her usual magnificence. Arthur, though taken by surprise, received her cordially. Such a woman could not command his admiration, hardly his respect; but it was enough for him that she was Ada's mother.

He welcomed her, and begged her to be seated. For a while, they conversed on subjects that were of no particular interest, until Mrs. Morton spoke of Mr. Mason's health, and expressed the hope that the change might prove beneficial to him. After a slight hesitation, she said, "I have not yet touched upon the cause of my visit to you this evening. I am desirous of having some conversation in which my daughter is concerned."

"You may be assured," said Arthur, "that if Ada is the subject, there will be no want of interest on my part."

This answer, and Arthur's countenance, convinced Mrs. Morton that he had no suspicion of what would follow; and the appearance of the young man, his graceful figure as he leaned, with folded arms, against the broad window, the expectation, unaccompanied by anxiety, that animated his features, the low, gentle tone of voice—these would have

disarmed most persons of unkindness; but Mrs. Morton was what is called a hard woman. Once determined on a thing, no obstacle affected her. By frugality and untiring industry, her husband had accumulated a large fortune, and gold was her god. Now, she had come with a steady purpose of breaking her daughter's engagement, and, careless as to Ada's suffering, it was not a matter of the smallest moment what Arthur would feel when she should have announced her intention.

"I left Ada so short a time ago," said Arthur, "that I need hardly inquire if she is well; and I hope that this separation, that is very painful to us both, will not be prolonged. My father's state of health is so alarming, that I feel I ought not to hesitate to make a sacrifice for his sake. Change of air may be the best medicine for him, and I hope he will soon return to his home restored."

"I hope so," said Mrs. Morton; "but, Arthur, what I have to say had better be said briefly and plainly. You cannot have forgotten that I never approved of my daughter's engagement with you, not from any personal dislike, but because your state of health has been such as to preclude the possibility of your ever being able to exert yourself for the support of a family, should such exertion become necessary."

Mrs. Morton stopped speaking, for Arthur's sur-

prise and agitation were so great that he stood like one bewildered, and evidently did not understand clearly what had been said to him. But, in a moment he recovered, and asked Mrs. Morton to explain herself. This she did, and added an allusion to the critical condition of Mr. Mason's affairs.

"But, do you mean me to infer," said Arthur, "from what you have said, that you wish to break the engagement between Ada and myself? Surely it is too solemn a covenant to be dissolved on light grounds."

"It is a light ground, Mr. Mason, that a man has not the means to maintain the woman to whom he offers himself."

"But I have the means," said Arthur, quickly. "I know that my father's estate has suffered from the carelessness or dishonesty of his agent, and from our own neglect, but the difficulty is not irremediable. I had intended to have persuaded my father to dismiss Johnson, and to have closely inquired into these affairs myself, but my father is averse to being annoyed just now. I hope, however, soon to return and arrange our business concerns, so that the loss to us will be trifling."

"It is too late," said Mrs. Morton; "that Johnson has involved you in a dozen ways; but I do not wish to discuss this—let every man row his own canoe. As far as my daughter is concerned, her en-

gagement to you must be broken. I never approved of it, and less now than formerly, and as you are going away, and the time of your return is uncertain, my daughter must be free."

"This is not Ada's wish?" said Arthur.

"No," said Mrs. Morton, "but that does not make it less for her good. I trust to you to act honestly. Time will prove you to be a poor man, and I have had too much to do with money not to know its value. I told Ada when I left home that I should see you and say to you what I have."

"Mrs. Morton," said Arthur, "I must see Ada myself. Do you know what you would do when you talk of separating us? My mother loved Ada as her own child, and you made a promise on a death-bed that you seem to have forgotten. You would not break a promise to the dead for money? I will *not* consent to the dissolving of this engagement until I see Ada. I will be as firm as you; firmer, for I have right on my side. But if Ada is satisfied to give me up, I will submit."

"I thought," said Mrs. Morton, "that your nice sense of honor would induce you to withdraw at once."

"My sense of honor, madam, leads me to think first of the woman that loves me. Does she cease to love me? It will then be easy to give her back her promise. But I must learn this from her own lips."

The color mounted to Mrs. Morton's face, and her eyes flashed with anger. "Suppose," said she, "that a short time proves your father to be a bankrupt—would you claim my daughter's promise without a dollar in your pocket?"

There was a coarseness in her expression and manner that shocked Arthur, but he replied calmly. "Madam if it be proved that I am a poor man, I will promise you never to ask your daughter's hand until I am able to support her as she is accustomed to live. But may I inquire how you came by this knowledge of the condition of our affairs?"

Mrs. Morton looked annoyed, but declined answering the question. "Mr. Mason," she said, "I will tell you plainly that my daughter shall not marry you unless you can prove to me that your fortune is equal to what it was when the engagement was formed. Ada will not dare marry without my consent, and I vow, that unless you can fulfil the conditions that I now name, I never will consent. But I do not wish longer to detain you." And she rose from her chair.

Arthur had stood during the interview, and he now advanced towards her. "I will remain here another day, in order to see Ada."

"It is not necessary," said Mrs. Morton, haughtily. "Ada is not very strong, and I do not wish her agitated. When you come back you will be able

to judge, if, after I have told you of my resolution, it will be of any use to press the subject of your marriage."

She bade him good evening, and hurried to the carriage, to which Arthur attended her. She did not even offer her hand at parting. Arthur waited until the carriage had driven away, and then returned to the library.

Most painfully came upon him this unexpected change in his prospects, and he saw, at one glance, how little he had to hope from Mrs. Morton's resolute disposition, and from the confusion in which his father's affairs were involved. He knew that he could never offer Ada the fortune he had once owned, for his father had, at Johnson's advice, sold property to meet urgent debts, and was still involved. He had no doubt but that it was Mrs. Morton's intention to break off the engagement. One thought brought him comfort, and that was, that Ada, with all her gentleness, had from childhood possessed great firmness of purpose. But what could she do in the hands of a woman like her mother, who, though she loved her child after a fashion, would not hesitate to sacrifice her, were anything to be gained by it. Arthur was overpowered by these reflections, and it required a strong effort to enable him to appear tolerably cheerful when he met his father. At a late hour he returned to his room,

and it was long ere he was sufficiently composed to sleep; and such sleep! the heavy locks of hair, damp and clinging to his forehead, a flush on each cheek, burning like a torch, and the breath passing rapidly from parched and feverish lips. Sleep that comes to the wretched from which they are glad to awake, long as the slumber often is. The sound of footsteps in the room, at an early hour, awoke him. Thomas was standing by the bed, with a note in his hand. He handed it, saying Mrs. Morton's servant requested him to deliver it without delay.

Arthur tore it open, and found in it a few lines from Ada that invigorated him more than his long sleep. Ada bade him hope, though everything seemed against them. Her mother had forbidden anything like a correspondence between them, and Ada felt unwilling to contend with her; but she entreated Arthur not to despond, but to leave their destinies in the hand of God, before whom the sparrow could not fall unnoticed.

Arthur hurriedly prepared for his journey. He saw plainly his path of duty. Everything must yield to the consideration for his father's health and comfort. He could not bear to think he was divided from Ada; he could not realize the scene of last evening, to be told he must give her up! This cloud must pass on, he said to himself. Hope was busy in his heart, for he was young.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE WORLD FAILS.

"Who will teach me? What am I to shun? Must I obey that impulse? Alas, our actions, equally with our sufferings, clog the course of our lives!"

DURING the year and a half that followed Mr. Mason's removal to New York, he passed the time in a round of pleasure and excitement. Thus, some try to crush the memory of the past. Every work of art that was exhibited in the city interested him for the time; he lost no opportunity of indulging his passion for music; he frequented the theatre, and every place that promised intellectual enjoyment. It seemed impossible for him to pass contentedly a quiet evening at home. His mind, in shaking off its gloom, grasped every new delight; the chambers of his soul, swept and garnished, were better prepared for new occupants.

The name of his wife never passed his lips; but by the sadness that overcame him when illness or

inclement weather detained him at his hotel, Arthur knew she was not forgotten.

As the months wore on, Mr. Mason's attacks of illness became very frequent, and Arthur was never content to be away from him; for this reason, he was often seen in places for which, by his religious profession, as well as from want of inclination, he was unfitted. Yet many of the pleasures that were so attractive to his father were enjoyed by him, too, and none more than the good acting he sometimes saw. The representation of a play should be an innocent pleasure, and it is to be deplored that the theatre is so managed as to debar those who so much enjoy the drama from an entrance.

There were two subjects of conversation interdicted between Mr. Mason and his son, the state of his pecuniary affairs and religion. Arthur saw it was useless to attempt to induce his father to return to Alabama, or to lessen the great expense at which they were living in New York. Mr. Mason declared himself satisfied with his agent, and continued to draw upon him for large sums of money for present expenditure, although Arthur frequently intimated to him the necessity of looking into his affairs; but he showed a morbid sensibility about them, and said it was impossible that they were living beyond their means. When Arthur would speak of the plantation, or of their servants, his father would declare

it would kill him to see his desolate home again, and he appeared to have lost the interest that he had always felt in the welfare of his dependants. And, for the subject that was nearest Arthur's heart, that of religion, he confessed a distaste for it, and sometimes intimated a doubt of its self-evident truths. Arthur knew there was no such being on God's earth as an infidel; there is the fool that *says* in his heart there is no God. Arming himself against the Creator, he would deny the first great claim that He has upon his creatures, that of having formed them. The *fool* toys with the idea that he will return to the chaos of being from whence he sprung, but there are times when he knows there is a God. Yet Arthur was forced to consult his father's feelings, and avoid religious subjects, for opposition so unnerved and excited him as to threaten, and sometimes to produce serious illness; he could only hope and pray, yet always with an anxious heart. In the mean time, his own health continued as good or better than it ever had been, and though sometimes painfully depressed in spirits, he thought he saw plainly the path of duty, and endeavored to follow it.

He had written to Mrs. Morton and to Ada; the former returned his letter unopened, with the request that all intercourse should cease between them, and Ada wrote him that she was very un-

happy, for her mother's determination to separate them seemed unchanged, and that while Arthur might be assured of the continuance of her affection, she could give him no other word of encouragement.

Towards the close of their second winter in New York, Mr. Mason's health failed rapidly; the excitement and fatigue of the life he led was wearing him out. His disease proved to be an organic affection of the heart, and, at times, his sufferings were very great. No longer able to go out for amusement, he depended entirely on his son's society. Books afforded him no pleasure, though a great part of his life had been passed in reading. How deep is the shadow that lies over the close of that man's life who knows not God. Happiness cannot live in such a presence, and genius that has arrayed itself against the Infinite, flies, a coward, at the advance of death. Hope, that flutters so long, falls to the ground. Affection alone clings to the sufferer.

Arthur never wearied of his charge. He was patient and gentle as a woman. He conversed cheerfully with the invalid, or read, when he was in a condition to listen. He performed every office that love could suggest, and while his hands were busy in some act of love, his heart was fully occupied, not exclusively with himself. His own interests he had given to the keeping of the Saviour, and he tried to have no care for the morrow. But,

whither was wending the soul of his father? Each day his body grew more feeble; the attending physicians, in answer to his inquiries, replied that their skill might only avail to relieve pain; there could be no recovery.

The shadow of death was falling towards him; he saw it rest on his father's changed countenance and emaciated limbs. Oh! it was now that God's hand seemed so heavily laid. Sweet were the tears that he wept as he kissed, for the last time, his mother's lips, compared with those he so often shed now! Light was the parting with Ada, when he thought of another parting, awaiting him. Valueless was the wealth that he knew he had lost, when he estimated the price of that soul that was rushing, all unprepared, to its final destiny. With what sorrow he saw his father turn away from the Bible that he sometimes laid in his way!

Where, he often asked himself, was the answer to his sainted mother's prayers, offered in behalf of one she so dearly loved? and how he waited and hoped for an answer to his own. Sometimes he would almost despair, fearing God had forgotten to be gracious, and that his father's eternity was to be passed —*was never to pass*—in woe unutterable. He struggled against such a foreboding, and looked up, ever from his heart arising the earnest petition—"Christ, who loved, suffered, and died, take from me all else

of this world's good, but spare my father until he be reconciled, through thy blood, unto God;" and seeing how short the time might be, he could no longer restrain his entreaties that his father would allow him to read the Scriptures to him—that he would listen to his prayers, unworthy as they were. On rising from his knees by that sick bed, he would feel an assurance that his prayers were heard, and although the subject of them never, by word or act, encouraged him to continue, yet he ceased to make opposition.

The weather, during the last two months of Mr. Mason's illness, and of his life, was very severe; and he suffered so much that some one was constantly required to be near, to attend to him. The Masons had many kind friends among the southerners who had become residents of New York; they offered to relieve Arthur in his office of nurse, at night, that he might rest. But Mr. Mason always became restless when his son was out of sight, and Arthur could rarely be persuaded to leave him. He had the assistance of a most faithful and useful man-servant, and this was all that he desired. At night, Arthur laid on a lounge near his father's bed, ready to get up at the slightest word, and only sleeping at such times as the attendant could sit up and watch for him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A DREAM.

"My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which, then, I can resist not."

It was towards midnight, on the Sabbath, and Arthur, resting in an arm-chair, was reviewing the incidents of the past day. In the morning he had attended service at Trinity Church, and was refreshed and encouraged in his patient waiting on God's mercy, by the reception of the Holy Communion. His thoughts wandered from the altar where he had knelt, to Calvary, where the Divine Man was expiring, in agony, on the Cross. Vividly, as if he had been an eye-witness, did that scene picture itself before his mental vision. The fearful signs in the elements; the fierce fury of the soldiers; the lamentations of the women; but above all, the sufferings of the victim! Arthur saw, in fancy, the deep shades of death, as they darkened beneath the closing eyes

and pale lips of Jesus; the pallor, as it settled over brow and limb; the dampness of death, matting the locks that pressed the brow; the crown of thorns; the drops of blood that exuded from the pores of the skin, in the awful struggle with the King of Terrors. He fancied the nerves of the mouth to compress around the lips, so white, from mortal suffering, the muscles of the arm to relax, and the grasp of the hands to loosen; those hands from which blood had dripped, but was now settling, where pierced the cruel nails; he almost heard the last sigh—"It is finished." Arthur seemed to be in a dream, and darkness spread before his eyes, as it had, at the crucifixion, folded its wings over the earth. Yet he could see the face of Jesus, and it was lovely; like the countenance of an infant that has passed from earth ere it rebelled against God. That still figure! that quiet face! how placid the Saviour looked, though fastened to the Cross. Arthur dashed a tear from his eye, and read in the expression of the martyred God, such hope as he had never felt before Rousing himself, he looked upon his father's face, as if he hoped there to see the peaceful reflection of the vision that he had been contemplating. That look brought him back to his great sorrow. While he stood contemplating with anguish the worn features, his father suddenly woke up, and called him with a trembling voice.

He hastened to the bedside, and, holding his hand between his own, asked him what he should do for him.

"Nothing, nothing, my son. But I have been much agitated—I have been dreaming of your mother —and—"

Seeing his father's nervous excitement, Arthur tried, by gentle words, to soothe him. "Try and compose yourself, my dear father," he said, "something disturbed you, and you are hardly awake."

But the thin hands continued to tremble, and the heart beat audibly, while on the sick man's forehead glittered great drops of perspiration. The wandering eyes settled upon Arthur, and the expression of horror passed away, while one of intense awe remained.

"Arthur," said Mr. Mason, "I have had a frightful dream. Great God! if it should indeed be so."

"It was but a dream," said Arthur; "compose yourself to sleep again."

"A dream," said Mr. Mason musingly. "No, no," he added, with energy, "it was—it is a reality. Oh! Arthur, I almost wish I *were* an infidel. Eternal vengeance is sure enough, yet I must anticipate it. That fearful dream!"

"To-morrow you will tell it to me," said Arthur. "But now it is better for you not to talk. I will sit by you, while you try to sleep."

"I dreamed," said Mr. Mason, as if not hearing what his son said, "that we were at home, and that you and I were standing on the porch that is overhung with sweet-brier. It was night, a night of serene splendor; innumerable stars glistened in the heavens, and the moonlight played upon every object before us. All was quiet, until softly the voices of the servants broke upon us, singing in their cabins. The air was one I have often heard at their camp meetings. Old Thomas was their leader. I never heard anything so sweet as their voices sounded in my dream. The hymn died away, and it was silent as before, until you said, 'These slaves must here hold communion with God, or there could not be so much harmony in their songs of praise.' Then I answered, 'It is very well for slaves to sing about God and Heaven, and Hell, but for men whose intellect has been cultivated, whose reason is their best guide, such occupations are a waste of time.' Hardly had I said this, when there was a total change in the scene upon which I had been looking. The moon and stars disappeared, and darkness spread before us. I tried to move to where you were standing, but the black darkness frightened me, so that I was afraid to stir. We stood, for a minute without speaking, when suddenly, from the east, we saw advancing towards us, a mass of lurid light, a creature whose form and motion resembled

that of a serpent as it travelled over the waves, mounting and descending. It came on, casting a fearful light by the way; rapidly it gained upon us, until clothed in a frightful sublimity, it swam above our heads.

"Then we heard cries of terror and dismay; the servants and neighbors were wild with alarm, and in the confusion, they ran about, not knowing one from the other. But I heard a cry above it all. Some voice shrieked out, 'It is the judgment! O God! it is the judgment.'

"Arthur! there was no fear on your countenance, but a look of tranquil peace rested there, and Thomas came towards me with a beaming expression of joy upon his face. He said to me, 'Ah master! the day that you did not look for has come. The Lord Jesus has a safe hiding-place for the poor slave, but how will it be with you?' I looked round for you, but could not see you, and I seemed to be alone.

"Again the sky was cloudless, and in the cerulean blue of night glittered the quiet stars. My foot touched a ladder, and when I looked up, I saw it reached the heavens. A voice near me said, 'Go up, and learn the destiny of that man who worships Reason before God.' I looked to the sky, which the ladder seemed to enter, and my sight reeled with the number of steps that I could not count. Yet I

sprang forward, impatient to know what was to become of me. I ascended, continually looking up, until I thought I had passed the region of the clouds. Then, music of such strange sweetness stole upon my ear that I could but stop to listen. I caught the words, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.' Even now, I seem to catch the cadence of the harp, whose swelling notes guided the singers. I strained my eyes, hoping to see something of the glory that was intimated by the radiance in the surrounding ether.

"Suddenly, from that brightness a form emerged, and instantly I recognized your mother. She came forward, and seated herself on the highest step of the ladder. The beauty of her earliest youth had been restored to her, and she had caught from the glorious light of heaven a ray that rested on her brow, and made it too dazzling for my vision.

"'Mary,' I said, 'I know you have been with angels; but I, without you, have wandered away from all good. Am I to go with you now, that we may never more be separated?'

"'You cannot come,' she said, sadly. 'The worship of the world never led man to God. The conditions of salvation were offered you, and you refused them; you cannot enter into the glory that I have seen. Never will that man who sneered at the cross of Christ see the God whom he has thus denied.'

"Then she turned from me, and I awoke. Thank God, Arthur, that I am still permitted to see your kind face! Oh, how I have suffered, through hours of pain, from the dread of an avenging God!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MESSAGE.

"The sun now rests upon the mountain-tops."

"LET me send for Mr. Taylor, dear father," said Arthur, some days afterwards; "you will be interested in his conversation. You have always admired him as a scholar and a man of genius. I want you to talk with him on those great subjects in which we all are so much interested. It is his vocation gently to lead to Christ the souls that Christ has called."

"But has he called *me?*" said Mr. Mason.

"He has—he has," said Arthur, "if you will only hear him. So often he has called you. By the teachings of your pious mother; by the prosperity and enjoyment of your early years; by the unclouded happiness of your married life; by the holy and consistent deportment of her who was so dear to us both; by her calm and beautiful departure from

earth; by the memory of her entreaties and prayers; by the pains and weakness of disease; and now by the fearful looking for a judgment to come—God's spirit has so often knocked at your heart—will you not open the door, that he may enter in? Good angels have sorrowed by your side that you still refuse the messages of mercy; evil angels have dogged your steps to drag you down to hopeless misery. But if Satan would draw you to hell, God is calling you to heaven. Oh, what joy is there in heaven when one sinner repents!"

"Remember," said Mr. Mason, "that in my dream my doom was told."

"Yes," said Arthur, "*in your dream.* Let the dream go; it has done its work. It has softened your heart by the memory of my mother; it has alarmed you by the suggestion of a fearful future. This dream was sent, as dreams are *sometimes*, from God; it was a message from heaven. The Mary of your dream, that was the love of your youth and your manhood, may be permitted to minister to your hours of languor and of pain. Oh, it will not be in vain!"

"But, Arthur, so many objections, so many doubts arise!"

"Close your heart against them all. Let reason and learning go; what are they in the sight of God?

Come to the Cross. Your sins are, as you have acknowledged them, great. God has them recorded in a book against you. Believe in Christ, and they shall be wiped out from the great account. Let me kneel down and pray, you joining me in asking of God, mercy through Christ."

"I cannot pray," said Mr. Mason, in a voice that was almost a whisper; "I dare not. The past, a long life of rebellion, comes up before me; the future—but one moment, and then eternity."

"Seize then the one moment. How many lost souls sigh for one moment. There is no *too late* with God, until the grave has claimed its own. It was not *too late* for the thief on the cross. Like him, believe, and cry out, Remember me."

"But Arthur! *he saw* the Lord Jesus."

"And you may see him now, by faith, as evidently as he with mortal sight. Blessed are they who, not having seen, believe."

The thin hands were crossed upon the breast, and Arthur assumed the attitude of prayer. Oh! it was prayer that went up to God from that room, prayer uttered by the lips of the son, by the heart of the parent, no other mortal hearing. Behold, he prays! Angels bear the tidings to their home, and they pass from cherubim to seraphim. Behold, he prays! and fallen spirits, the unredeemed, descend to their

abode and mingle their disappointed cries with the curses of the Prince of darkness. Joyous are the echoes that are filling every arch of heaven, and full of horror are the reverberations to which the lost are listening in each cavern of hell.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ASSURANCE.

"Faith lights us through the dark to Deity."

And now there is no more doubting, no more fear. Christ has again heard a voice, "Lord remember me." Again he has answered, "To-day thou shalt be with me."

But there is suffering; that poor feeble frame must undergo the pangs of dissolution. Casting off its companion, the soul must go forth, alone. Oh! the curse of sin! of death! to disunite what God once joined together. The curse—to part what is so closely knit together, that God will once more bring about a re-union, though he seek for the decayed, separated, dissolved particles of mortality in the ground, on the rock, in the depths of the great sea, in the winds, in a chaos, like that from which, at his voice, the earth emerged.

Once, the dying man said, "Arthur, I came at the eleventh hour."

"And they all received a penny a day," said Arthur. Then he opened the book and read the beautiful parable, explaining it, and closing the explanation with fervent prayer. On another occasion, he read, in his regular course, the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. His father listened with intense interest.

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came—"

"Stop, my son! While I go to buy, the bridegroom has come."

"He has not called for you; he has waited for you to buy. You have already bought, without money and without price."

"Arthur! how awful is that verse—the door was shut."

"The Bible," said Arthur, "tells us of one deathbed repentance; that one was accepted. You have not offered to buy with a false coin—you have bought with the blood of Christ. That blood was not shed in vain, for one soul that trusts in it."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LINGERING STILL.

And storms are roaring as if in rivalry from sea to land, from land to sea, and forming all around a chain of the deepest elemental ferment in their rage. There, flashing desolation flares before the path of the thunderclap. But thy messengers, Lord, respect the mild going of thy day.

WELL might a solemn stillness pervade that room. Within it, a soul was stretching its wings, fluttering for immortality, but still heavily chained to earth.

"Mr. Taylor will soon be here to administer the Holy Communion, my dear father," said Arthur; "are you able to receive it?"

The smile that passed over the dying man's face was his expressive answer; it was full of hope; peaceful and intelligent.

"Our old friend, Mr. Read, will be with him," said Arthur. "Is there anything you would like me to do for you before they come?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Mason; "but, I am all unworthy to take even the name of Christ within my lips; can I dare to eat his flesh and drink his blood? My son, it is an awful mystery to feed spiritually on Christ."

"And yet," said Arthur, "can the branch live except it receive the means of life from the vine? It was the command of Christ, that we should do this in remembrance of him. A blessing will follow your obedience, and your desire to honor him."

"Ah," said Mr. Mason, "how happy am I to be permitted to profess his name, though at the last moment—when drawing to the close of my mortal life. The retrospection of a lifetime of rebellion against God, presses upon me. Yet the hope of salvation is priceless."

"And what will be the realizing of that hope?" said Arthur. "We toil for earthly treasures in this life, but we forget the city whose streets are of gold, and whose gates are of pearl." Then after a moment, he added, "What will heaven be to you, dear father, after so much suffering? I wish I could go there with you."

"There is one thought that oppresses me," said Mr. Mason; "were I relieved of that, I should be done with earth. It is, that I have, through indolence and extravagance, and neglect, impoverished you."

"Let no such anxieties intrude upon you," said Arthur, hastily. "I require but little, for my habits are not expensive. Leave me, and all that concerns me, to God."

"Is there no hope of your marriage with Ada?" asked his father. "She will soon be of age, and can dispose of herself. Will she feel it a duty then, to be guided by her mother?"

"Ada is a Christian," said Arthur; "no doubt she will do what is right. All my thoughts are for you now, for we must so soon be separated. I have no care for my future, nor do I seek to know the Eternal will regarding myself. If prosperity and happiness are mine, I will bless the Great Giver; if he bring more sorrow, I am sure he will bring a consolation, as he does now. If the days come dark, I must wait for the heavenly dawn. Let me read to you again, my dear father, those lines that pleased you so much this morning."

Arthur opened a book that was lying on the table, and holding his father's hand, he read:—

"But in God there is nothing finite; but in God there is nothing transitory; but in God, there *can* be nothing that tends to death. Therefore, it follows that for God there is no present. The future is the present of God, and to the future it is that he sacrifices the human present. Therefore it is that he works by earthquake—therefore it is that

he works by grief. Oh! deep is the ploughing of earthquake! Oh! deep (and his voice swelled like a sanctus rising from a choir of a cathedral), oh! deep is the ploughing of grief! But oftentimes, less would not suffice for the agriculture of God. Upon a night of earthquake, he builds a thousand years of pleasant habitations for man; upon the sorrow of an infant, he raises oftentimes, from human intellect, glorious vintages that could not else have been. Less than these fierce ploughshares would not have stirred the stubborn soil."

"So," said Arthur, closing the book, and pressing his lips upon the hand he held, "we will leave the building up of our heavenly home to the Great Architect, satisfied with what he does here, to make us fit to take possession."

"But," said Mr. Mason, after a few moments' silence, "if you should be poor—if I have done you this great wrong, will you forgive me?"

"How can you ask it?" replied Arthur; "but indeed, I will promise to forgive you, and to love you, and to come to you some day, to that happy place, where there will be no more partings."

Mr. Mason laid his hand upon his son's head. Well was it for both, in that hour, that God denies to his children a knowledge of the future. Else, that death-bed had not been so peaceful at the last.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DEPARTURE.

"How calmly sinks the setting sun,
Yet twilight lingers still,
And beautiful as dreams of heaven,
It slumbers on the hill."

THE priest, robed for the solemn occasion, advances, and offers the affecting emblems. Upon them, the streaming eyes of the sufferer are fixed. He views his Saviour crucified. He has discovered the mystery, the understanding of which has been denied to so many, because they sought it in the spirit of controversy, and not with humility and faith.

He felt that Christ was there, though the bread and wine were unchanged. He remembered, with awe, the saying, except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, and he fed on those holy mysteries, by faith; on the body that was broken, the blood that was shed for him. Dying mortal that he was, he knew that he should live forever by that body

and that blood. He felt that it was so, for Christ had said it. He sank back on his pillow exhausted, murmuring the words to which he had listened, "Preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." The tears ceased to flow, and a ray of satisfaction gleamed over the emaciated face; the eyes were raised to heaven, the lips closed, and all was silence.

Arthur's head was bowed in prayer as he leaned by the bed; the soft gas-light fell on his tall figure and dark hair, and on the countenance of his old friend, Mr. Read. It rested on the white forehead of the dying man.

There was no dying man there; there were the mortal garments, useless now, and for a time to be thrown aside; the soul had fled. Oh, the dimness of earthly vision, that the shining ones of God had not been seen when they entered and departed! Oh, the dulness of earthly ears, that they heard not the unfolding of their wings as they took flight with the ransomed spirit! They bore it up "through the air, sweetly talking as they went; even to the gates they conducted it." There it was clad in raiment that shone like gold.

"Arthur," said Mr. Taylor, gently touching the bowed head, "God has taken your father to himself."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PLEASURE.

"I devote myself to the intoxicating whirl."

FROM a death scene to a ball-room! But what transitions are there not in life?

It was time for the guests to assemble, and Mrs. Elwyn had passed from the reception to the drawing-room, to the conservatory, the supper-room, through the splendid halls, up the winding staircase, to the rooms above. All must soon be filled with admiring guests. She returned to the reception-room that her husband had just entered; his usually grave face was animated as, looking round, he commended his wife, who had superintended the arrangements. His look congratulated her on her own appearance. Her hair, waving until it reached the ear, passed from thence, in flowing curls, to the shoulder, where they rested. Her dress, so costly, yet so simple, fitted exquisitely her perfect form, and her cheeks were flushed with anticipation of pleasure. Her

face was very beautiful, and the grace of her person was displayed in every movement.

"Sophie," said Mr. Elwyn, "you have love-darting eyes, and tresses like the morn."

"How did you ever come to be a merchant?" said she, in reply. "You are always quoting poetry. But how do you like the rooms?"

Her husband surveyed the rooms, and again quoted poetry—

> "'To splendor only do we live?
> Must pomp alone our hearts employ?'"

"Oh, how can you?" said Mrs. Elwyn. "When I am very happy, you have always something gloomy to say. I wish every poet that ever lived were burned with his own manuscripts!"

"Why burn the poets?" said Mr. Elwyn. "They do not make all the trouble in the world; they only sing their own. Forgive me for talking so. I will try and forget everything sad, at least until to-morrow. Put on your company face, oh, 'fair as the first that fell of womankind!' for I hear footsteps ascending."

While the hours of night were waning away, brilliantly the light from chandeliers fell upon the gay and beautiful that were assembled in those rooms. There was no sound of riot or ill-managed merriment, but a subdued murmur of delight passed

from hall to hall. Did all those hearts throb happiness? Why not? Behold the lavishment of wealth! the thousand dollar dresses! the hundred dollar pocket-handkerchiefs! the diamonds! the pearls! the curious, costly fans!

Was all as it seemed to be in this assemblage? Look at that young creature, with her arm linked to that old man. See in his face the traces of a mis-spent life! He is seventy; she is seventeen, and his wife! Is she not poor, with all those jewels flashing on her person? Did she not barter her purity for the diamonds that encircle her neck? Has she not laid her head on an unholy pillow?

Near her, haughtily, but sorrowfully looking at her, is the one she deserted to become what she is. Will the time come when she will weep for what she has cast aside? Now, for she has just seen him, the color is fading from her cheek; a memory that she wishes were dead is knocking at her heart. A day of reckoning *will come*, for that she trampled under her feet her woman's faith.

Oh, Fashion! Fashion! were all these hearts bared that now seem to beat in unison. Oh, the fears, the concealments, the remorse, the despair, the sin, the sorrow!

Come to the ball-room, and watch the dancers. Here you see the grace of youth. Here is prostrated the dignity of age. Yet in the glaring light, how

flash the dancers' eyes, or how they languish in the splendor that brings with it such an ecstasy. Come to the supper-room. How choice the viands! how keen the delight of the epicure! The music-room is quiet now; only here murmur words of love, and beating hearts forget that in such a scene Death is an uninvited guest. He is here now, looking on the bright eyes, the fairy forms, marking the flushed cheek and languid step, laughing at the props that age has borrowed from art, counting his victims. There are those here upon whose soft cheek the worm will soon banquet.

"These pleasures end in delusion."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BOUDOIR.

"But ah! I feel already, that in the best of moods, contentment wells no longer from my breast."

It was the afternoon of the day following the ball. Mrs. Elwyn left her bed, exhausted with fatigue, for she was so excited when she laid down by the morning light, that it was impossible for her to sleep. Yet she was elated with the complete success of her entertainment, with the admirable manner in which everything had passed off. She closed her aching eyes, and the glasses with their ruby wine, the costly bouquets, the gold and silver, still passed before her, in array. Melodious music broke upon her troubled rest, whispered compliments were re-uttered in her waking dreams. There was no sleep for her, though she continued nearly all day in bed, hoping to induce it. So she got up, and after a careless toilet left her dressing-room for the boudoir. Everything here was beautiful too, every-

thing in expensive but perfect taste. On a marble table was a bouquet, for which one hundred dollars had been paid, to adorn the centre piece of the supper-table the night before; thence it had been transferred here.

Mr. Elwyn was lying on a lounge, and by him was standing a lovely child of three years, who had not seen its mother that day.

"You here, George," Mrs. Elwyn exclaimed, as she threw herself upon an opposite couch. "What has brought you home so early?" She could say no more, for the child's arms were around her neck, and the pure kisses of infancy closed her lips. Mr. Elwyn languidly replied that he did not feel well.

"I am not really ill," he added, "but I am disappointed."

"About what?" she asked.

"It has been eight months, Sophie," Mr. Elwyn said, "since Mr. Mason's death; and Arthur, a few days after, returned to Alabama to find his father's property, or, what remained of it, in the hands of Johnson the agent, and some other speculators. Mr. Mason's expenditures here, his neglect of business matters, and the dishonesty of his agent, have resulted in Arthur's being left without a cent. The plantation and negroes have been sold to meet debts, whether just or not, I cannot say. Arthur has

been accustomed to consider himself rich; what will he do with his delicate health and refined tastes?"

"How did you hear about it?" asked Mrs. Elwyn.

"Through Mr. James Read," Mr. Elwyn replied, "who is now in New York, taking every means to find some clue to Arthur's present residence. Yesterday, Mr. Read came to my office, to talk to me about it. When Arthur got home, he did not pretend to dispute the claims of his father's creditors, though he was shocked to see that some men, that he had thought honest, were connected in business with the agent. He was distressed, too, at parting with the old servants; he told Mr. Read that had he been certain they were passing into good hands, he would have cared, comparatively, very little. He was very calm and quiet in all his interviews with Johnson; in fact, he saw it would be of no use to contend. Ada *would* see him, though Mrs. Morton made a great many objections, and was very rude. Ada told him of her grief, that everything seemed against him, but she said her mother was so violently opposed to her marriage, that she would not hear his name mentioned, though at the same time, she declared she considered herself as much bound to Arthur as ever. Ada was very foolish to give up to her mother so, for Mrs. Morton is a very selfish and unreasonable woman. However, Arthur could

not press his marriage then, for he knew he could not support a wife."

"Ada will have enough for both," said Mrs. Elwyn.

"Yes," her husband said, "but Mrs. Morton, like most of those who have toiled to be rich, hates a poor man. Poor Ada! it was a sad interview. Mr. Read says she cried terribly when she told him of it."

"How do they know Arthur is in New York?" said Mrs. Elwyn.

"He told Ada that he should come here, and avail himself of his education for his support. But before he left home, he had a hemorrhage, and he looked most wretchedly when he started. Since then, nothing has been heard of him, and Ada is miserable. She begged Mr. Read to make every effort to find him, that she might write to him. I have no doubt she already repents giving up to her mother's notions, for, as Mrs. Morton sanctioned the engagement in the first place, she had no right to break it without a just reason. Ada has some property, independent of her mother, and after a year or two she must be very rich. But, at any rate, I am most anxious to hear something of Arthur."

"Well, you can't help it," said Mrs. Elwyn, "it is of no use worrying."

"It is certainly my duty to do everything in my power to find Arthur out, and to assist him. His father was the best friend I ever had. When my own father died, Mr. Mason continued me at the school where I was, and offered me a college education. I owe him everything; for my prospects at one time were little better than Arthur's are now; the death of my aunt, just before I left school, changed them. Besides, Sophie! you have always known Arthur, and must feel interested in him. How much he has suffered from ill health, and how delicately he has been nurtured! There never was a more perfectly upright and honorable young man; and he has fine talents; the worst of it is, he is so sensitive. Only think, at this moment he may be ill, and in want."

"Want!" said Mrs. Elwyn; "how can you talk so? Arthur Mason in want!"

"Why not?" said her husband; "he has no money, I am sure; and he is in wretched health. You think because he was once rich, he cannot be poor. How little you know of life, Sophie! How ignorant you are of what is passing in your own city! Is poverty always clothed in rags? Every day, I see men who were once rich, and are now poor. The very worst sort of poverty is genteel poverty. In New York society, it is a crime to be poor; guilt is more readily forgiven than penury. The sin of yester-

day is pardoned to the scoundrel who rides in a gilded coach, and offers his guests sumptuous wines. But to be poor is to be forgotten."

"I do believe, George," said Mrs. Elwyn, with a yawn, "that you are getting religious. What a sermon you have preached!"

"I wish I were a Christian," said he; "Arthur Mason is; my father was, too; and I sometimes fancy I hear him talking to me, as he and my mother often did. But I believe I have preached you to sleep."

The wife languidly opened her eyes, and then closed them. The story of the probable sufferings of another, had had the effect of a pleasant song. With her head on her hand, she sank into a deep repose. Mr. Elwyn kissed his little daughter, who had sat on an ottoman by him, during the conversation with her mother. He thought of a verse; it was—"She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she lives."

CHAPTER XL.

ADA.

"Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear."

SOME weeks passed, without any information of Arthur being obtained; though Mr. Read and Mr. Elwyn hunted up all his old friends, making frequent inquiries at the hotel where he and Mr. Mason had boarded. From the proprietor of the hotel, they learned that Arthur had left a valuable watch with him, saying it had consumed his present means to defray his father's funeral expenses, and that he would leave the watch until he could redeem it by paying what he owed for board. The value of the watch was more than the debt incurred, but Arthur had never returned to claim it; nor could any reason be given for his silence, but that, being unable to pay the debt, he left the watch instead. This thought increased the anxiety of his friends; the

watch had belonged to Mr. Mason, and Arthur's pride and affection would have united to induce him to redeem a pledge that had only been offered through the greatest necessity.

Other, and startling tidings, had reached the Elwyns, from the south. Ada had become her own mistress; death, sudden and terrible, had relieved her from her mother's unnatural tyranny. Ada bowed in submission to this awful dispensation, but there was little hope or consolation in such a death. Increasing anxiety for Arthur assisted to rouse her from the violence of her grief. The thought that he too might be dead, was overwhelming. She could not brave the possibility, and she determined to accompany some friends who were about to visit New York, that she might unite her efforts to those of her friends, in the hope of learning the fate of one so dear to her. Arthur had promised to inform her if successful in whatever he might undertake.

"And if not successful, Arthur," Ada said, "will you not write to me? if I cannot disobey my mother and unite my fate to yours, at least let me know of your health and prospects. If you do not succeed, will you be too proud to let me aid you?"

In reply, Arthur smiled and looked upwards; then said, "If not successful, sweet Ada, remember—

'There's a land where those who have loved on earth
Shall meet to love again.'"

Ada wept at the remembrance of this little incident. At the time, she was so absorbed in the grief of parting with him, she did not consider its full import, but now she feared she understood it too well. They might not meet again on earth. This, she thought, was its interpretation. "God forbid!" she exclaimed, in the bitterness of her heart, when she spoke of it to Mr. Read. "What is all this wealth to me if he is dead?"

When Mr. Elwyn heard of her intention to come to New York, he wrote to her that she should be most welcome at his house.

CHAPTER XLI.

A FASHIONABLE MOTHER.

"Nor end nor limit is prescribed to you. If it is your pleasure to sip the sweets of everything, to snatch at all as you fly by, much good may it do you."

ONE day Mr. Elwyn came in, and looking through the house for his wife, found her in the nursery, with her beautiful child in her arms. Nothing made him so happy as to see her thus occupied, for though he loved her dearly, he could not fail to see and lament the self-indulgence, the indolence, the fashionable folly in which her life passed. What so likely to entice her away from these as the affectionate caresses of her child? He stood for a moment looking at them, without speaking. The little girl was resting her fair head against her mother's bosom, and with one arm and hand, she was trying to encircle her mother's waist. Sophie was singing, rocking slightly as she sung.

The song was finished too soon, and when it

stopped, Sophie said, "Get down, darling; kiss mamma, and go to Jane."

"Oh, no, sweet mamma!" the child answered. "One more song."

"To-morrow, but I must go now," said Sophie, withdrawing the little arm that was clinging to her. "Take her, Jane; I must go. I dine out to-day, and I have not decided what I shall wear."

"Sophie," said Mr. Elwyn, "stay at home to-day. Take your baby, and sing to her, and we will dine quietly together."

"Impossible!" she replied. "Don't ask me. Lent commences to-morrow, and we shall be dull enough. Mrs. Davis told me, to-day, that people were to be unusually religious this season. *She* does not intend going to any parties, and has stopped her receptions. Emily Davis was trying to dissuade her mother from doing so, but her mother said, 'My dear, you are not a member of the church; you can go where you choose, and your father will attend you.' But turning to me, she added, 'I never have any peace in Lent, for Mr. Davis hates parties, and because he has to go with Emily, he is in a bad humor from Ash Wednesday until Easter.'"

Mr. Elwyn laughed out. "Poor Davis!" he said. "With his wife's fashion and religion, he is offered up a daily sacrifice at the domestic altar. But, Sophie! stay at home to-day. I have just had a letter

from Ada Morton. She is miserable about Arthur. She may come now at any time. I am expecting her every day."

"Well, I have no objection," said Sophie; "but I can't stay at home to-day. If you don't want to go, I can send for Count Almonski; he offered to go with me."

"No," said her husband; "if you will go, I will go, too. I have all confidence in your affection, but you are too young and beautiful a woman to go into society under the protection of a stranger."

As he spoke, the little girl quitted his side, where she had stood from the moment that she saw him come in. Running over to her mother, she raised her lovely little face, and said, "Please, mamma, stay with us."

There was no relenting in the heart of the woman of fashion; she gayly laughed, and said, "No, no! let me go." She pushed the little child gently away from her, and then tripped from the room to her own, where she was soon absorbed in the important question, "What shall I wear?"

Had it always been so? No. Sophie had married from affection. When Mr. Elwyn brought her to New York, all the world was nothing to her, compared to his love. But a life of ease, an indulgent and too yielding husband, unlimited command

resist. Had she stayed at the South, after her marriage, she would, probably, have been all that her husband wished her to be. In New York, the temptations to a life of pleasure were many, and she yielded to them. There was no one to point out the dangerous rocks that lay in her course; it was a fair sea over which her bark was sailing, and prosperous gales wafted her along. She did not see the cloud at a distance, no bigger than a man's hand, for rapturous music intoxicated her senses. Like Ada, she was an orphan, but she had not had the advantage of the religious instruction and influence that Ada in her childhood received, in common with Arthur, from Mrs. Mason. She had been brought up in a family of formalists, whose dull way of life and long prayers had had the effect of turning her away from the love of a religious life. The very church where her guardians had worshipped, she hated to enter. It was a great unseemly building, with bare walls, and large, unfurnished windows. How delighted she was, when for the first time, she *worshipped* in Grace Church, New York. "This is religion indeed," she said, as she sank back in her luxurious pew, pushed the velvet cushions up to support her back, and rested her feet on an ottoman. The fine singing charmed her. She never thought of engaging in the service, she had too much to look at. As she rode home,

she told her husband there was some comfort in praying to God in a decent church; it was a real pleasure to be where everything was so nice and stylish.

Mr. Elwyn's disposition was naturally religious. There are some men, who, without possessing enthusiasm of sentiment, are inclined to the consideration of the mysteries of their nature. Such characters are gentle and affectionate, and often possess a strength of will and firmness of purpose, that repose, for a time, so quietly, that no one dreams they are there. It was so with Mr. Elwyn; added to these characteristics, there lay in his heart memories that a word and sometimes a look would arouse. Early in life as he had lost his parents, he could now repeat the "Divine songs" they had taught him. There were a few verses of Scripture, the hearing of which, in the services of the church, would so affect him, that tears would start into his eyes. For now, only in church did he hear discussed the themes that were the first that engaged his mind. In the world—in the counting-room, in the gay assembly, or in his luxurious home, God was never spoken of. How natural, then, that Ada's deep sorrow, gentle submission, and fervent piety should so attract him, and he hoped that his wife might be influenced by an association that was so pleasant to him.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CONSCIENCE.

"Leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her."

VISITERS had just left the drawing-room, and Mrs. Elwyn remained among the velvet cushions, and was looking at herself reflected in an opposite mirror, when a servant came in and told her that Mr. Arthur Mason desired a few moments' conversation with her.

"Arthur Mason!" she said, in the greatest surprise, "and why don't you ask him in?"

"I did," the servant answered, "but he won't come up. He says he is not well, and is afraid of meeting company, so he hopes you will see him in the sitting-room below. He looks very sick, madam; I would not have known him but for his voice."

"Tell him I will be there in a moment; but John,

if Mrs. Le Roche calls, come right in and tell me, for I have an engagement with her at two o'clock."

Mrs. Elwyn hurried down to see Arthur, but she stopped short when she came into the room where he was, there was so remarkable a change in his appearance. She could not help expressing her astonishment, at first, but from politeness, restrained herself after a moment, though Arthur's excessive weakness and emaciation were calculated to call forth not only sympathy, but surprise. She gave him her hand and welcomed him with kindness, and then asked him where in the world he had been hiding himself for so long a time.

"In New York," said Arthur; "I have been here ever since my visit to Alabama."

"But why haven't you been to see us? Mr. Elwyn has been so anxious about you, and has been inquiring about you in every direction."

"I have been ill for a long time," said Arthur; "for several months, those with whom I lived despaired of my life; though better now, I am very feeble. I called at Mr. Elwyn's counting-room this morning, but he was not there; I hoped to find him at home. John tells me he is out."

"Yes," Mrs. Elwyn said; "you know he is hardly ever at home in the morning; but, Arthur, come and dine with us; you will be sure of finding him at home at dinner."

"Thank you," said Arthur; "I will not be able to do so; any exertion fatigues me so much, that I am sure I will not be well enough to come out again to-day. Yet, I am very anxious to see Mr. Elwyn."

"Leave a message with me, and I will tell him as soon as he comes in; he will be sure to come and see you. What shall I say to him?"

"I dislike to annoy you with my affairs, Mrs. Elwyn, but perhaps you will do what I am sure Mr. Elwyn would. You must be aware," he hesitated, "that I am very poor; and, until I knew I was poor, I did not know how proud I was. I will not, however, go into any details, further than to say I must do something to obtain a subsistence for the time that I may live. There are several things that I might do, were I not in such wretched health. I have obtained a situation as agent of some books and periodicals, and if I grow stronger, the going about that fatigues me so much now, may be of service to me—"

"Madam," said John, opening the door, "Mrs. Le Roche is here, and wishes me to say she will sit in the carriage until you come, as she is in a great hurry; it is half past two o'clock."

Mrs. Elwyn got up instantly, and said to Arthur, "John interrupted you, Mr. Mason, but I have a most important engagement; I am so sorry that you

should have come at this time, when I must leave you."

Arthur saw that she was impatient to go, and said, "I will not detain you."

"What can George do for you?" said Mrs. Elwyn, without resuming her seat, or asking Arthur to keep his. "It is, indeed, *more* than half past two (looking at her watch). Won't you dine with us?"

"Impossible!" said Arthur; "I am too unwell; but, if you would subscribe to these periodicals, it would afford me, at least for the present"—

Mrs. Le Roche's voice, calling to John, attracted Mrs. Elwyn's attention. "Excuse me," she said, "but I cannot keep Mrs. Le Roche waiting. Come another time, and I will hear all about your plans. I must leave you, good morning."

Arthur looked in astonishment at the heartless woman, who, with a slight courtesy, hurried from the room. She ran up stairs for her wrappings. "Another time!" Arthur repeated to himself, as he looked around the costly residence. "No! I will ask no more favors; it will not be long that I must suffer. God give me strength to bear it!" He passed through the hall slowly, and into the street. Once he turned to look back to the house, and sighed. He had hoped to have heard something of Ada; at least that she was well; perhaps, that she

still loved him. This last and dearest hope he now resigned.

In a few moments, Mrs. Elwyn came down prepared for her ride: but, as she was about to get into the carriage, it occurred to her that she had not told Arthur of Ada's being in New York, and for the purpose of hearing of him; nor had she asked him where he might be found. Shocked at her forgetfulness, she turned again to the house, hoping to find Arthur in the sitting-room, that, by this information, she might atone to him for her impoliteness in leaving him; but he was gone. Hardly noticing Mrs. Le Roche, who was beckoning to her to come, she told John to go to the corner, and look round, to try and see Mr. Mason. John obeyed her, but soon came back, saying it was no use to look for Mr. Mason, for he went as soon as she left him; and he must have been out of sight long ago. She was almost tempted to give up going out, in the hope that Arthur might pass that way; but Mrs. Le Roche, who had become vexed at being delayed, got out of her carriage, and came quickly up to her. "Dear Mrs. Elwyn," she said, "we will be too late for those magnificent shawls; the sale will be over by the time we get there; and after we have done with them, I made an appointment for us both to be at Mrs. Irving's, to consult as to the characters in which we shall appear at the Fancy Ball. Come

on." Mrs. Elwyn followed her, but slowly, for her heart was loudly reproving her, and it seemed to prophesy some sad misfortune that would be the consequence of her unkindness to Arthur, and of her unpardonable forgetfulness about Ada. So her morning was wretched, in spite of Mrs. Le Roche's brilliant gossip, and the splendid shawls. Even the important subject as to who should she be at the Fancy Ball, lost much of its interest, for all day, Arthur's blanched face rose up before her; his weak voice she could hear above all the din of Broadway, and a tear started to her eye, at the recollection of his neat but shabby dress. The lustre in his eyes, and the hectic on his cheek—oh! it seemed as if some spectral form was always facing her, whichever way she turned. And she thought how happy Mr. Elwyn would be to know Arthur was in New York —to take care of him as a brother would. And Ada! poor Ada, struggling against a double sorrow! She determined never to tell of the scene of the morning, for she did not even know where Arthur lived, and she was afraid, from a knowledge of his character, that he might not come again.

Could it be possible, she asked herself, that Arthur Mason was reduced to the poverty that his dress and looks bespoke? The wanness of his features and the attenuation of his limbs, she never could forget. She remembered, as Mrs. Le Roche's

carriage rolled down Broadway, in all that noise and bustle, she remembered that Arthur said something about obtaining a subsistence; and he asked her aid. Her womanly spirit was ashamed at the thought that this appeal had been unheeded, almost unheard. Poor Arthur! in what luxury had he been reared, how much he had always been loved! Now, how desolate his condition was, for he was alone in the world; the last of his family; and his inheritance passed to others; and, sadder than all, Ada lost to him, *and through her!* This last thought was too much; for, had she received him more kindly, had she bade him stay and rest, had she given up her selfish pleasure to cheer him, had she told him that Ada was now her own mistress, and anxiously waiting to hear of him, how changed would have been that sad expression of his face! what joy to his heart! What a happy meeting, had she detained him there, for Ada and Mr. Elwyn to come in and welcome! But, too late! too late! So the ride to her was miserable; and though she talked and laughed, and tried to quiet them, the reproaches of her conscience became each moment keener, and she was relieved when she found herself at home again. Mrs. Le Roche observed that something was wrong, but as Mrs. Elwyn made every effort to seem cheerful, she was too polite to notice it; but she told her, at parting, to be sure and study her character

well, as the ball was to be a brilliant affair, a sort of antidote to the dullness that Lent was leaving in the great heart of the fashionable world.

Ah, woman of fashion! pass under the portals of your gorgeous home. There are menials who prepare your way, who watch to obey your slightest wish. Pass up the velvet-covered staircase, looking into the room where, a few hours ago, you might have entertained an angel, unawares. But a slight welcome fell from your lips; there was no entreaty to remain, and the angel turned away. Pass on, up the carved and winding stairway, and shut yourself in your own room. Rest on that luxurious couch, and ask what new thing has come over you that the world and its allurements have all at once become tame and unenticing. There is speaking now to you, the voice of your better nature, the voice of your youth, before that youth was sullied by the worship of the world; the voice of your womanhood, the voice of your God. Listen to these voices, and follow them whence they are calling. But no, you will not hear; what have you to do with reproaches of heart and conscience? Too long have you bowed before the altar of Mammon, an exacting deity, holding his worshippers by chains that are hard to be unwound or broken. Dash away the tear, that an angel might have wept at the remembrance of Arthur Mason's appearance that

day. Say hush! to the appealing heart, and brave it out; for it is not your fault that there is sorrow, and sickness, and death all over this great city. It has not come to you.

Mrs. Elwyn struggled against her gloomy thoughts, charged John not to mention Mr. Mason's visit, and kept her secret. She dreaded lest her husband and Ada should know how she had treated the object of their anxieties. She reasoned away her scruples about the concealment, by the argument that as she could not tell them where to find Arthur, it would make them more unhappy to know of his illness and of his visit. After awhile, almost the remembrance of him was lost in her preparations for the fancy ball, where she appeared in a becoming costume, and sustained, most gayly, her part.

CHAPTER XLIV.

GRACE CHURCH.

"Would that I were hence!
I feel as if the organ
Stifled my breath,
As if the anthem
Dissolved my heart's core!"

It was Easter Sunday, and a more delightful day never dawned. Ada was up early, and her occupations were such as the season demanded. After a late breakfast, Sophie announced her intention of going to church, and the carriage was ordered.

From the time that they left their house, one of the palaces of the Fifth Avenue, until they reached Grace Church, Ada observed a procession of elegantly-dressed persons, on their way to the different churches, the ladies' costly silks sweeping the pavements. Sophie recognized a friend walking with some other persons, and she stopped the carriage, insisting upon her taking the vacant seat, and accompanying them to Grace Church.

"Impossible!" said the young lady. "I could not go to Grace Church to-day."

"Why not?" said Mrs. Elwyn, entreatingly.

"Oh, for the best reason in the world! I am not fit. I am going to Trinity." She made a graceful courtesy, and passed on.

Mr. Elwyn laughed. "You see, Ada," he said, "God must be worshipped *à la mode* in Grace Church. Never go there in a silk that costs less than five dollars a yard. Your shawl must be worth a thousand, and your handkerchief not less than one hundred dollars. The heart that prays acceptably must beat under lace and brocade. Don't offer to sing; only the choir is permitted to praise God, according to the most approved style. A false note would render the whole performance unacceptable. As to the prayers that the rector reads, I have been going to Grace Church for two years, and I never heard one of them; for the church is so built that only those who sit near the altar can hear the service. That makes no difference, though, for who goes to Grace Church to be preached to? Sophie does not like me to talk so, and I'll allow it is a beautiful building, perfect in its architectural arrangements. But there are some things I must tell you beforehand, Ada, or you will be as stupid as I was when I took a seat in my pew for the first time. When we go in the church, you will see persons

ranged on each side of the door, seated in those little halls or ante-rooms. These are strangers, and they must stay there until we, who have pews in the church, have arrived; for it would be showing us great disrespect, to have strangers made comfortable before we were there to secure our own. Some of the pews are locked, I am told, but mine never is. When the service is about to commence, the sextons show the strangers where they may go. Those who come in carriages or are handsomely dressed are first provided for. This is the aristocracy of religion! The others are seated somewhere. You will hear good singing to-day, and for the rest, judge for yourself."

Ada had no time to reply, for they were at the church door, and in going in, Mrs. Elwyn expressed her regret that they had come *too soon*, for the service had not commenced.

Ada was delighted, on looking round, to see the exquisite taste displayed in the construction of the church; particularly, in the arrangement of the light. The window at the far end, to the left, as she sat, was of stained glass, figuring the Mosaic dispensation. Clouds shadowed the mount, and Aaron and Moses were there, holding the tables of stone. The painting was fine, and nothing could have exceeded the effect, for Ada felt that old things had passed away when she saw that the church was

lighted by another window, a painting of Christ, the Sun of righteousness. The real rays of the sun from without, illuminated the pictured ones that represented the glory of Christ—the Gospel light—within. Perhaps the light came in too strongly, making the robes of the Saviour look gorgeous. Yet, the union of design in the two pictures, and their good execution, delighted Ada's cultivated taste.

From the pictures, her eyes turned to the congregation that was now thronging in. She understood what it was to be dressed for Grace Church. The robes of silk and velvet shone in the dazzling light of the pictured window.

In the near pews, she observed ladies and gentlemen conversing; she could not avoid hearing a good deal that they said. Two persons in front of her, were extolling the perfections of the concert singer, who was to perform the Easter anthem, after the sermon. They spoke of the price that was to be paid her, and of the exceeding sweetness of her voice, as adapted to love songs, or sacred music. The gentleman said that he came to church, that day, to hear Madame Bertini, and to see the fair lady with whom he was talking. She shook her fan at him, and called him a wretch, then, raised her glass to survey the congregation.

The organ pealed forth, and Ada looked up to the arches and spires through which the grand and

solemn music was reverberating. A strain of fine opera music was played, and the grand tones became softer, until, hardly audible, they died away. The trembling of the instrument seemed to be felt, like echoes that are being lost among the distant mountains.

In the silence that succeeded, Ada waited to hear, "The Lord is in his holy temple," but until she looked to the pulpit she did not know the service had commenced. She opened her prayer-book and tried to follow the exhortation, that she could not hear. By the most intense attention, she occasionally caught a word, that guided her as to where the preacher was, but had she not known the service by heart, she might as well have been in a Jewish synagogue, as here. She kneeled at the confession of sins, but, though she could assume the attitude of prayer, she could not collect her wandering thoughts. There was but little chanting, but in this, Ada's nice ear perceived the harmony of the voices. One or two verses of psalms were sung. A sermon was preached that she could not hear, and tired to death, she wished the service were over.

Again, a brilliant prelude was played on the organ. The minister had disappeared from his pulpit; the people were looking towards the choir, with countenances of pleased expectation, and the deep notes of the instrument filled the church, and slowly

died away. As they ceased, a voice powerful and sweet filled every part of the church. It was a woman's voice, but angelic in its tones as it mounted to the carved spires and windows, fled from corner to corner, and descended to the ears of the listeners.

Ada was entranced as she listened to the anthem that commemorated the death and resurrection of the son of God. The music of the first verse was slow and solemn; the words were impressively sung. Then the voice swelled and quickened, and its notes betokened anxiety, for the second verse announced the entombment of Him to whom so many looked as their deliverer. He lays in the grave! the voice poured forth a wailing lament, loud, and then subdued. Ada's bosom swelled as she listened, and tears fell from her eyes. He arises! and with the loud music of the organ, the voice triumphant, mingled. Every part of the church gave back the joyful and magnificent strain of the singer.

The anthem appeared to close with this outburst of music. Still, the dull, trembling sound of the instrument—again, the voice. Where is it? so faintly heard, but clearly, as it soars to the utmost height of the spires, passes from arch to arch, lingering like some bird that would thrill forever, near the skies. Ada held her breath and looked up. There was no sound throughout that church but the carolling of the sweet singer. Every form seemed

to be a statue in its seat—there was no motion—fearful to lose the faintest note.

And still more fearful, for those notes are fading away, clear still, and soaring among the vaulted arches of the roof, soft and faint, but lingering there—fainter, and dying away into silence.

Ada bent her head, and burst into tears, every nerve of her frame was so highly strung.

Crowds were leaving the church; many came only to hear the music.

Mr. Elwyn whispered to Ada, "Shall you remain to Communion?"

The question reminded her where she was. In the house of God! She was shocked to think how completely she had forgotten it. She declined remaining, not feeling in a state to kneel at the holy altar. She followed Mrs. Elwyn to the carriage.

"Ada," said Mr. Elwyn, "what do you think of our Sunday opera? Wasn't it grand? I came very near clapping at one time."

"I could never worship in this church," said Ada. "I am grieved to think how entirely I was taken up with that singing, fine as it was."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Elwyn, "you prefer to hear bad music in church."

"I would even prefer *that*," said Ada, "if the heart went with it."

"How do you know but Madame Bertini's did?"

Mr. Elwyn laughed when his wife asked this question. "Why, Sophie," he said, "Madame Bertini was paid very high for her singing to-day. Every note that thrilled through that church cost money. If praise, it was hired praise. I cannot think that God, whose altar is the whole earth, and for whose sanctuary Heaven is not glorious enough, will be pleased with coined tributes from the lips of people whose lives are so often unworthy of them. How would it sound to read from the pulpit of that church the history and character of each that sings, for the amusement of the congregation? Would *you* visit that concert-singer?"

"Certainly not."

"But," said Mr. Elwyn, "she is good enough to carry to the throne of God the praises of a congregation, for she sings alone."

"Why do you go to church," said Mrs. Elwyn, "if you find so much fault with what you see and hear there?"

"Going to church," he said, "is a habit that I got into when I was young; I believe I caught it from my mother. I go to Grace Church because you do."

"You and Ada are Methodists," said Mrs. Elwyn. "You like preachers that break down pulpits and wear out Bibles in their zeal. But I like propriety in church."

"The propriety that I saw to-day," said Ada, "seemed a mere formality. But I do not wish to judge harshly. This is certain, you must not ask me about the sermon. I did not even hear the text."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE OLD BREWERY.

"Woe! woe!
Thou hast destroyed it,
The beautiful world,
With violent hand.
* * *
Build it again,
Build it up in thy bosom!
A new career of life,
With unstained sense, begin;
And new lays
Shall peal out thereupon."

It was a fortnight after Arthur's visit. Mr. and Mrs. Elwyn were in the drawing-room with Ada. Mrs. Elwyn was reading a French novel. Her husband and Ada were conversing.

"To-day," said Ada, "is the anniversary of Mr. Mason's death. I almost despair of ever receiving any tidings of Arthur. He cannot be alive, or he would let me hear from him. Sometimes, I think he may not know of my mother's death, and pride

may restrain him from communicating with us. Often, I fear he is ill; among strangers; and without money. If I only could see him, to tell him that all his father owned could be his again, I should be content, even if I had to learn that he had ceased to love me."

"I am discouraged at Arthur's continued silence," said Mr. Elwyn; "though I am sure, there is no danger of his forgetting you. If he had died, we should have heard of it; such bad news would soon fly to us. I feel certain that he is in New York, though I can give no reason for this conviction. Perhaps he has found some employment, and prefers being established in it, before he advises us of his situation."

"I wish I could think so," said Ada, sighing deeply.

"Where did you go this morning, Ada?" said Mrs. Elwyn, laying down her novel.

"You will be shocked when I tell you," said Ada. "To the Five Points."

"Good heavens!" said Mrs. Elwyn, in great astonishment; "what took you there?"

"Curiosity; and, perhaps, something better than curiosity."

"But, Ada," said Mrs. Elwyn, "the Five Points is the rendezvous of all the thieves, cut-throats, and abandoned wretches of New York. There is no-

thing there but what, I should think, a woman who had any delicacy or refinement would shrink from. I do not even know where the place is."

"Oh! you are mistaken," Ada replied. "Five Points is a dreadful place, I know, but, with all its horrors, nay, right in the midst of them, you may see something beautiful—something that women of delicacy and refinement have greatly contributed towards accomplishing."

"I did not know," said Sophie, "that a decent woman ever approached Five Points; I am amazed to hear you have been there. But, as you *have* been, tell me what you saw that was beautiful."

"I have an engagement that will occupy me for a couple of hours," said Mr. Elwyn, "so I will leave you two, to ramble about Five Points alone. You can get along without me."

"Good night!" said Ada, "if I should not see you again; for I am very tired, and shall go to bed early."

"I was so surprised," said Ada, when Mr. Elwyn had closed the door, "to find Five Points in the very heart of the city; a short walk from Broadway brings you to it; it is not far from the Bowery. Going down the street that leads to it, we saw only those miserable Jews' stores, at the doors of which, idle and ugly-looking women were sitting. Some of them had their babies in their laps. Most of

them had a foreign look. Some of the countenances were hideous, all seamed with marks of dissipation or disease. I felt so disgusted with their looks, and with the dirty street through which we had to pass, that I proposed to Mr. Elwyn to turn back; but he said that we had started, and we had better go on with our expedition. An old colored woman that we questioned, guided us to where five points of the different pavements approach each other very closely, giving the name to this wretched locality. Looking over the way I recognized the mission school, for I had recently seen a print of it. I suppose you know the history of this building? No! It is very interesting. It is built where, for many years, stood 'the Old Brewery,' in whose wretched halls so many crimes of the deepest and darkest dye have been committed. Here was always a shelter for the robber and the murderer. It was the home of such. Children have been born and brought up under this roof, never hearing the name of God but when spoken blasphemously. The young were decoyed, and often forced here; and though they shuddered, at first, at what they saw and heard, their hearts soon became as black as the old walls of the building. Oh! the babe that opened its eyes here, on the darkened light of the sun, and the old, haggard sinner, were equally cut off from hope; for, within these dreary, dungeon walls, good people did not dare

venture; even to approach them were a risk. Oh! Sophie, many a poor victim of temptation, hurried on by uncontrolled passion, took refuge here, and breathed out her weary life; many a one, brought hither, passed a few gloomy days and nights, comparing the awful present with the sinless years that were past, languished in a vain remorse, shrieked out—'Lost! lost!' and died."

"Oh! Ada," said Mrs. Elwyn, "how can you talk so? You fancy all these dreadful things."

"Indeed, I do not. There was a gentleman there to-day, that Mr. Elwyn knew. In a low tone, not intending me to hear, he was speaking of the horrors of this place. From those windows in our sight, he said, women, out of whose hearts all that was good had not departed—high up, from those windows, had they dashed themselves down, risking a frightful death, rather than endure the life they were obliged to live; for they were prisoners, not daring to attempt to leave the place openly. Abandoned as they were, it was too dreadful to witness the foul murders, and all the other crimes, that were hourly committed before their eyes.

"At last, there were those who remembered that Jesus Christ died for the unhappy and guilty inmates of the Old Brewery; and they felt constrained to tell them of it. Jesus! that name so sweet, so powerful, *must* sound in their ears, *must* be uttered

by the lips of the outcasts. But who dare intrude upon them! who would venture in the den of the murderer? who brave the rudeness and violence of dissolute men and women! There were found some bold enough to make the trial. God gave them courage. Before those doors stood men and women who dared to enter, though warned away. They made their way up the crazy, filthy staircases, and met at the doors of the rooms, their degraded tenants. They were received with shouts of derisive laughter, with sullen looks, and angry and defiant gestures; with open threatenings. They were frightened, but they believed their Master had brought them here, and they stayed. They saw, on a foul wretched pallet, a dying man—with staring eyes and bony limbs. He cursed God for his hunger and misery. [Oh! the untold woe that is the heritage of sin. The earthly part of this poor wretch's suffering was nearly over.] They gave him food that he was loudly calling for, though the death-struggle was approaching. They mixed for him an anodyne that softened his dying agonies. The summons of death they could not stay, but they tried to take away somewhat of its horror. Under his head they gently placed a pillow, and they moistened, with a cordial, his parched lips. Oh! if they could save him! that he might prepare to meet God, face to face. They saw it was useless to try

to do this, but they could not refrain from naming, bending close to his ear, one Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus! how strangely that name, reverently uttered, sounded amid the curses and the awful jests that were being uttered around him. Jesus! the dying man once more opened the eyes that were closing in a dreamless sleep. Wandering for a moment, they were fixed, as if upon some point in the past, following the last effort of his wrecked will. Jesus! when had he heard that name, so softly uttered? A vision of his poor but virtuous home flits by him; a vision of the village church and its white haired pastor. Years had rolled by since then; he gathers up his expiring strength, puts forth his skeleton hand—Oh! could he grasp them and bring them back. They are gone—memory, as it dies away, tries to count them. They are gone, and he sinks with them into the abyss of the past. Time is no more with him.

"What a place for a corpse, and where is the solemnity that attends the parting of soul and body! The air of the room is poisonous with the breath of drunken men and women, with the unclean rags of the children. Oaths and blasphemies do not cease, though that ghastly form, with its fallen jaws and stiffened limbs, is before them. The wife wails for a few moments the lover of her guiltless youth, and then begs the visiters to give her drink; it is all she

asks. Not water, Oh, no. Brandy! brandy! is her horrid cry. Let her drink, and forget, and die! They will not; yet they cover the face of the dead, and have the body lifted from the dirty straw. They carry him out and bury him. Then they clothe his famine-struck children, and by kindness, entreaties, and tears, induce the mother to go with them from this wretched place. They find her employment, and patiently follow her up, and at last, rejoicing, see her turning from her old life."

"Oh Ada," said Mrs. Elwyn, "what a picture! Do you believe there is, really, such wretchedness and sin upon the earth?"

"Yes, indeed. More of it than you or I dream of. Sophie! the world is wretched from sin; that is our birthright, and our inheritance. I sometimes fancy Satan coursing over the earth in triumphal procession, and close upon him follow his agents, Sin and Death. And these desolate the earth, that would be so lovely without them. There is one, the King of Glory, who alone can stop their frightful progress. For this purpose, he commissions his followers to go about, as he did, on the earth, doing good. The wish to imitate him, stimulates the efforts of the missionaries at Five Points. They hope to accomplish most through the children. They have established a school in the house built on the site of the Old Brewery. It has prospered—it *must*

—for God is the teacher. In the same building with the school, many of the reformed reprobates live. The rooms are rented to them, employment is found for them, while their children are instructed and clothed, if necessary. The sick are nursed in this building, and all are cared for. The most perfect system and order are preserved. There are regular hours for prayers, and for retiring for the night. No noise, no dissipation is permitted. Every Sunday, there is religious service held in the chapel, which is well attended by those who live in the house; and the poor wretches, that live in Five Points, lounge in from curiosity. They hear, and sometimes, one hears, believes, and lives. Oh! Sophie! the unspeakable gift! Is there not a magic power in the name of Jesus, that a bloated vagrant, a man who has fought, and robbed, and murdered for a lifetime, hears, and weeps—and lives a new life?"

"How did you learn all this?" asked Mrs. Elwyn.

"One of the ladies who first ventured into the Old Brewery described to me many scenes that she witnessed there," said Ada. "Once, she went into a room where a very young woman was standing, calling for help, for her babe was dying. She seemed to be distracted in her grief and loneliness. The babe was a mere mass of bones, and its mother was little better. They were both dying of famine.

The husband and father had deserted them, and they were perfectly friendless. She proved to be a virtuous woman, and when asked afterwards how she came there, she said she did not know her husband's character when she married him, and that he took her there. Then, though she saw how dreadful the place was, and though he neglected her in her sickness, and let her want bread, she *could not part from him, for she loved him.* Oh, Sophie, does it not seem holy, this woman's love? You may go over the whole earth, following in the track of Satan, Sin, and Death, and still you pick up everywhere, in the dust beneath your feet, this gem, woman's love."

"What became of the woman?" asked Mrs. Elwyn.

"She is now a most efficient aid in the work of renovation going on at Five Points. The baby revived as soon as it had proper food. Its mother was almost beside herself with joy at seeing her babe rally its strength, and she ate what they gave her as if she were starving, which was, indeed, the case. When she and her child were well, she was most anxious to do something to show her gratitude to her benefactors. She said that had her babe died, she would have killed herself, for as her husband had left her, the child was all that bound her to life. Her own family were so much offended

with her, for having lived at Five Points, that they would not speak to her. She loved those who had come in time to save her and her child from perishing, and love sharpens the eyesight, and opens the dull ears. She saw a way of returning the favors that she had received, for she is very useful in the mission establishment. I saw her child to-day; he is a bright little fellow. Now, Sophie, have I not told you of something beautiful at Five Points?"

"I never hear of such things. I am often called upon for money for charitable purposes, and I give it, but I do not inquire what becomes of it."

"You are out of the sphere of such things, in a measure," said Ada. "Your fashionable friends would be scandalized to hear the scenes, that I saw to-day, discussed. *You* ought to take an interest in whatever is of service to your fellow-creatures, not only from the natural kindness of your heart, but because Mr. Elwyn is so anxious to do good. But, Sophie, I have not told you half that I saw to-day at Five Points. I could not tell you. It made me tremble and cling to Mr. Elwyn's arm to look in faces that we met. I got so frightened at the appearance of everything after I left the mission house, that Mr. Elwyn laughed at me, and showed me the policemen that I could see in every direction. I did not know until to-day that the policemen wore uniform. It reassured me to see them about, and

when the clerk of the mission house offered to walk with us, I readily accepted the offer, for I was anxious to see Cow Bay."

"Cow Bay!" said Mrs. Elwyn. "Where on the earth is that?"

"You will not find it on the map," said Ada, smiling. "How is it that I, a stranger, know more of New York than you, who have lived here years? Cow Bay is the name of a part of Five Points where a sort of triangle is formed from the shape of the streets that run out towards great high, tumbling-down houses. In every room in these hideous-looking tenements two or three families live. There they swarm, and revel, and riot, depositing their stolen goods until they can get a chance to sell them to some of the low trading establishments near. In summer, the tops of the houses in Cow Bay and all over Five Points are covered with vagrant sleepers, who have no other place to rest, or who dare not go abroad to look for a more comfortable place. Until lately, awful murders, the circumstances of which never will be known, were committed nightly in Cow Bay, and it was not safe to pass through it in the day. Even now, you must be careful how you pass by."

"Such wretches," said Sophie, "had better all be hung. The idea of having such a den in the same city with us!"

"Oh, Sophie," said Ada, "there are things there such as I thought could not exist in our happy country. Never tell me that Dickens' pictures of low life are exaggerated after what I saw to-day. Just at the corner of Cow Bay, a crowd of women were collected, and as we came near them, they raised a shout of laughter. We soon knew the cause. An awful looking creature, that I was ashamed to call by the name of woman, was *preaching*, as they call it. She was dreadfully intoxicated, reeling as she stood upon a box. On her head was an old lace cap, with streamers of faded, dirty ribbon, and artificial wreaths dangling down the sides. Her person was loathsome to behold, but it was dressed in what was once a costly brocade. It was awful to hear her swear, as, with arms extended and clinched fists, she was describing some scene to her auditors, most of whom were women, without bonnets, and dressed in the same style. It was shocking to see babes in these vile mothers' arms. What bosoms on which to repose the head of infancy! What hearts against which wearied childhood might lean and sleep! What lips to press kisses, that must wither to curses, on the brow of a child! We hurried through this crowd as best we might, but not without hearing language that I would rather not have heard."

"How could you stay?" said Mrs. Elwyn. "I should have been frightened to death."

"As I was," said Ada; "but I wanted still to look about me. I met two little boys, not more than ten years old, arm in arm, with cigars in their mouths, both intoxicated. Think of it, Sophie! drunken childhood! They were the sons of a notorious robber, in Cow Bay. They never left Five Points, probably, but to steal. We met a youth sixteen years old, so the gentleman who walked with us said; he had known him from a little boy. At sixteen, he looked sixty. He must be dying of some awful disease, for his flesh is yellow, and hangs about him in bloated masses. He was staggering from side to side of the pavement, and as we passed him he looked at us, with a leering laugh, like a fiend; I never saw anything so dreadful as that face. There was a very pretty woman, neatly dressed, leaning against the corner of the Mission House. She had a long gash across her cheek, made by the knife of her husband, who stabbed her in the face, in a fit of jealousy. At the Mission House, she was nursed until her recovery; for she nearly died from the wound, and from fright. But she will not stay there; the old pleasures lure her back—the midnight revel and carouse.

"In the yard of the Mission House, there is a part of the Old Brewery left—a mere shed. I

looked at it with something of the feeling with which I saw the key of the Bastile."

"You look quite worn out;" said Mrs. Elwyn, after a moment's pause.

"I am very tired," said Ada, "and I am going to bed. Good night." She stooped and kissed Mrs. Elwyn's cheek, before going.

"Oh!" thought Mrs. Elwyn, "did she know the wrong that I have done her, when I refused assistance to the friend of her childhood and mine, and her betrothed! Oh! could I recall that wretched morning! Where is Arthur this night? Is he living? is he dead?"

Such thoughts were agony to her, as she sat alone in her splendid drawing-room. Woman of fashion! your sin will find you out. Why does Arthur's face haunt you? There is no sweet sleep for you on your downy couch. Conscience lays a thorn on your luxurious pillow. Conscience! the world had tried to deaden its voice forever. But it would speak.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A FASHIONABLE WIFE.

"The parted bosom clings to wonted home,
If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth."

"SOPHIE," said Mr. Elwyn, when they were through with breakfast the next morning, "how pale you look. Are you unwell?"

"No! I am only low spirited."

"What can be the matter?" said Mr. Elwyn cheerfully. "Has your mantua-maker committed murder on a dress? or has the supply of Honiton lace come short this season? Whatever is the cause, let me suggest a remedy—go with Ada to the Five Points."

"No indeed!" she said; "Ada's account of her visit there has depressed me to death. If I were to see all she described to me, I should be wretched for the next year."

"And I," said Ada, "feel not happier, but more

reconciled to my lot than I have been for a long time."

"I cannot comprehend you, Ada!"

"I mean," said Ada, "that when I think of the situation of these wretches at Five Points, I feel how gracious God has been to me. You, Sophie, have so many sources of happiness, that you can afford to be a little low-spirited sometimes, but I have so few, as far as this life is concerned, that I must make the most of them all. The most disagreeable recollection that I have of Five Points is the impression left by the sight of those children there. They looked old in vice and wretchedness. I shall have to keep Nannie before me all day, to rid myself of the gloomy picture of infancy that has fastened itself on my memory. How bright you look this morning, Nannie! you are a perfect sunbeam."

Nannie looked very grave, as if charged with an impropriety. "No, I am not, Ada," she answered, and went on eating her roll. The solemnity of her manner made them all smile. Nannie smiled too, from sympathy. Breakfast was a happy time to her, for she always sat in her high chair, by her father.

"I do love children," said Mr. Elwyn, "and for the reason that most persons love them—at least, this is one reason. When we see an interesting

child, we regard it as the picture of what we were once ourselves. Now, I often take Nannie in my arms, and caress her, associating her not only with my own early days, but with her mother's, and with all the little people that we frolicked with, long ago. I am half sorry that I ever left that dear old country place to live in this great heartless city, and I am tempted to catch up Nannie and her mother and go back, never to come here again."

Ada looked down while Mr. Elwyn was speaking; she was thinking of her early days, of Mrs. Mason, and of Arthur. Mr. Elwyn saw to what point her thoughts were turning, and he changed the subject. "This breakfast hour," he said, "is the most delightful to me of all the twenty-four. This little room, so much more plainly furnished than any of the others, suits my simple taste. My wife always looks beautifully in her morning dress, and I have Nannie so cozily seated by my side, and since you have been here, Ada, it has been more agreeable than ever. I hate to get up and go to Wall Street, to jostle and to be jostled, to see people planning and driving, and cheating each other, watching for bargains, and talking of stocks. When I am a poet, I shall sing the breakfast hour."

"I thought," said Sophie, "that poets sang the evening hour, and they are right, for I am always

so stupid in the morning, and so bright and gay in the evening."

"Yes," said her husband, "but my idea of happiness is home happiness, and in New York we have no evenings at home, except when we have a terrible storm or a party; and one of these is about as pleasant as the other. I come home completely worn out, and after we have dinner, I should like to sit down to rest and enjoy Sophie's society. But just at a reasonable bed-time, we must dress and go out. Now, I *must* go. Sophie, take Ada to the Astor library to-day, and to the Turkish Bazaar. I have taken her to the Tombs, and the Five Points, and to all the places where you would not go. Be sure Nannie is one of the party, she will enjoy the ride. Good-by; let me find you both in good spirits at dinner." So, with a kiss to his little girl, the man of business went forth to his labor.

Nannie did enjoy the ride, and on their return, Ada said, "I am ashamed of bringing up my griefs so often, but do you know that I never pass any place where I see fine pictures on exhibition, or where fine music is to be heard, but I think, possibly, were I to go in, I might meet Arthur. His taste is so cultivated that it would lead him to such places. After a little while, I shall go home if I do not hear from him, for I have no right to intrude my sorrows on others."

"You shall not go," said Sophie; "what would you do there, entirely alone? You would be a great deal happier though, if you went out, with me, into gay society. There's the opera; I should think you would like to go often, for you are such a good musician. I go, merely because it is the fashion, for as you know, I am perfectly ignorant of music as a science. You are always thinking of death and such things; how can you be happy?"

"Oh!" said Ada, "I could not go into gay society; I should not enjoy it, and my deep mourning would be out of place there. As to happiness, Sophie, it is not to be found in the world, that is, in the pleasures of the world."

"Yes," said Sophie; "there is a dead man in every one's heart; I dare say no one is perfectly happy. Every person must have a care."

"But what care need you have?" said Ada. "Think of your blessings. With such a husband! so good as he is, and so devoted to you; with little Nannie—with beauty, wealth, and health, certainly you ought to be happy."

"Sometimes I am," said Sophie, "but often I am wretched. I must have excitement, because I am accustomed to it. I could not live without going out a great deal, for it is a habit with me. I used to be fond of reading, but now, except to skim over a new novel, I never open a book, for it takes all

my time to dress and to receive and pay visits. I suppose it is all right. People that are placed in a certain class of society must support their station."

"But is there no other way of supporting this station, but by attending operas, and expending so much money and time in dress and such things?" asked Ada. "Mr. Elwyn seems to dislike this sort of life."

"Yes, but he introduced me to it," said Sophie; "I was a real country girl when I came to New York; I loved the South, and should have been satisfied to live there always; but now, I cannot live anywhere but in New York."

"Tell me, Sophie," said Ada, "does this fashionable life satisfy you? Are you as happy as you were before you knew it?"

"No, indeed!" said Sophie; "sometimes I am sick to death of it. While I am at a ball, I enjoy myself exceedingly. I like attention, and I always receive a great deal. I like to hear people whisper about me, as I walk through the rooms, and to know that my dress is as elegant, and perhaps more so, than any person's in the room. The excitement is the great charm; the music, the light, the mirrors, the flowers, and jewels, all these things enchant me; but when I come away, I feel the want of it, and look

forward to renewing, to morrow, the scene of to-night."

"What a confession from a sensible woman!" said Ada, smiling. "But suppose, Sophie, that sickness, or loss of fortune, or some calamity—the death of your husband or child—should come upon you; then you would feel the true estimate of fashionable life."

"How can you talk so?" said Sophie. "You are conjuring up horrible spectres, to frighten me. George and Nannie are in perfect health; how can you suggest such a thing as their dying?" and she put her arm round her little girl. "You are a perfect raven, Ada!"

"I only say such things are possible, dear Sophie; God grant they may be far off. The life of a woman of fashion offers a certain sort of happiness in prosperity; when the dark days come—the rainy days of life, and they must come to all, the world will be a wretched comforter. I like New York, and under some circumstances, I should like to live here; but I would take interest in many things that gay people do not think of. I was delighted, the other day, at the Bible House. How much good is done in that building. To think of the Bibles that are published there, and how they go all over the world, to sanctify house and heart. All the operations of the Bible House are carried on by steam; it works

from story to story, just as the *one* power of grace carries on *its* work, all over the earth. The American Female Bible Society, to which you are a subscriber, Sophie, has done a great deal of good. Thousands of dollars have been given by women, rich and poor, according to their abilities; and it is delightful to think that many a woman's heart has been consoled by the reading of a book, the gift of a sister in a strange land."

"I am always intending to go to the Bible House, but I can't get time for everything. Here we are, at home; how cold it is. I hope George is waiting for us, for I have been thinking all day of his wanting to spend his evenings with me; if I had not promised Mrs. Tessaire certainly to go to her soirée to-night, I *would* stay at home."

"Oh! do stay," said Ada, as they got out of the carriage; "it will please Mr. Elwyn." But they found Mr. Elwyn had not come yet, though it was past their dinner hour. They waited dinner for him some time, and Ada said perhaps he had gone home with some friend, to dine.

"Oh no!" said Sophie; "he would have sent me word; he always does."

"Probably he has been detained at his office;" said Ada; "don't be uneasy."

"Let's have dinner, John;" said Mrs. Elwyn; "he will be in by the time we sit down."

But dinner was over, and day had closed in, and he did not come. Mrs. Elwyn was evidently anxious, listening to every footfall, and starting at the ringing of the door bell, wondering, all the time, what could have detained him. At length she went up stairs, leaving Nannie with Ada, in the sitting-room, that looked upon the street. Ada took a chair by the window, and lifted the little girl to her lap, turning aside the curtain, that she might see the passers-by. It was a cold, dismal Saturday evening; the wind was blowing and shifting, and Nannie was much amused at the way the people held their cloaks about them, and ran along. For a time, Ada talked with her, and then the little one became quiet, leaving Ada to her own thoughts; they were not pleasant ones. Another weary day, and no tidings of Arthur; each morning brought hope, each evening disappointment. "I might as well give him up;" she said to herself; "but I cannot. What is the mystery of his silence. Oh! how many hundred people pass here every day; why does not he come? How many are going to their homes and friends this evening! if he would but come to me!" She bent over the little child and wept. Nannie looked at her with some surprise, but her eyes were growing dim with sleep. Ada held her closely in her arms, and kissed her. "Oh! Nannie," she said softly, "how can your mother neglect you so? she is now

dressing for a ball, instead of singing you to sleep, or telling you of God; what happiness she throws away!"

She recollected Sophie's account of the happiness she enjoyed in the world, and she sighed at the recollection. Happiness! she thought. Is there such a thing as happiness here? It is not under this roof, for the world does not satisfy Sophie's longings for it, and Mr. Elwyn, devoted as he is to his wife, is grieved at the life she leads. And I am not happy. This little angel that is dreaming in my arms is happy, and it is a pity that she should ever cease to dream!

She kissed her again, and laying her on a sofa, rung for the maid to take her to bed. Then she went to Mrs. Elwyn's room, afraid to trust herself again to meditation.

She found Mrs. Elwyn preparing for the ball. The flowers, the lace scarf, all the elegant accompaniments to a rich moire antique, were thrown upon the bed. Sophie was in the hands of a hair-dresser, a woman who lived with her principally to arrange her hair, and to assist her in dressing.

"Sophie," said Ada, "I don't want you to go out to-night unless Mr. Elwyn has come in."

"No, he has not come yet, but I am expecting him every moment. It is after nine. I hope he will come so as to dress and be ready to go at ten."

"If he does not come, won't you stay at home?" said Ada.

"No, indeed! though I feel like anything but going to a party. The truth is, I want to get into good spirits, for last night I stayed at home, and heard your doleful account of Five Points, and all day I have been worried about something or other. I am very anxious about George, but I must go out for a little while; when he comes home, I am sure he will come after me."

Ada felt it would not be polite in her to press the subject any farther; she hoped every moment that Mr. Elwyn would come in. In this she was disappointed, and Sophie went on with her dressing, until, splendidly arrayed, she took up her fan and lace handkerchief, and looking at her watch, found it was after ten. She courtesied playfully to Ada, and bade her good-by, and said, "I wish I could make up my mind to stay with you, but I told you how it was, this morning. I must have excitement, though I know I shall not enjoy myself to-night. I'll soon be home, but if I don't find George here, I shall be frightened to death." Ada went to her own room, wondering and indignant. She knew that her friend loved her husband, and yet she could dress and go to a ball when there was every reason to be anxious about him. How could it be? Ada was too ignorant of the world and of fashionable life to see into it.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ARTHUR.

"Immortality o'ersweeps
All pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and peals,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into my ears this truth, Thou liv'st forever."

It was the darkest time of the night, the hour that precedes the dawning of day, when Mr. Elwyn turned the corner of the street that led to his house. By the lamp in front of his door, he saw his wife, in her brilliant ball-dress, going from the carriage to the house. He remembered that it was really Sunday morning, as he hurried on, and telling the coachman to wait with the carriage until further orders from him, he hurried into the house, and followed his wife to her room. She saw him with great pleasure, and exclaimed, "Oh, George! have you just come in? If you knew how miserable I have been about you all day! Where have you been?"

"You have a strange way of being miserable," he

said. "Is it possible that you could go to that ball when you had not heard of me since breakfast?"

The wife looked embarrassed, and said, "I supposed business kept you."

"Business never detained me a whole day from you, Sophie, and business never could keep me occupied during the hours of the Sabbath, not if by so doing I could coin untold gold. Neglectful as I feel I have been as regards my religious duties, I have always reverenced the Sabbath. You have been dancing away its holy hours, forgetful of your duties as a wife, a mother, and a Christian woman."

Mrs. Elwyn felt that she deserved the reproof, and the very consciousness of this might have made her irritable under it, had she not observed the expression of her husband's countenance. There was upon his face not only great fatigue and paleness, but exceeding distress. She said to him, "What is the matter? Has anything happened? What kept you all day?"

Mr. Elwyn had thrown himself in an arm-chair, and was resting, with his head back; at first he did not answer her, but when she repeated her question, he said, "Certainly, I will tell you, and I would, if possible, have sent you word why I could not come home, Sophie. Mr. Reed and I have at last succeeded in finding out Arthur Mason."

"Have you?" said she. "Oh, how glad I am!

I have been so unhappy about him ever since the day he was here." She was so taken by surprise that she forgot her secret. Mr. Elwyn started up. "The day he was here; what *do* you mean?"

Mrs. Elwyn recollected herself in a moment, and was much embarrassed.

"Tell me, Sophie," said her husband, "has Arthur Mason been to this house since his return from the South? Explain yourself, and don't deceive me." Still she remained silent.

"What is the concealment?" he said. "Oh, my wife! I have seen how pleasure has come between you and your family. I have seen your love for me fading away under the influence of your love for admiration, and I cannot close my eyes to your neglect of your child. All this I have seen, but I have thought you good and true, and that there was only a cloud between us that would pass away. It has made me unhappy, but I hoped you would see this in its true light, and that you would come back to me. I said I would be patient, for I was so proud of your beauty that I introduced you to a life, the temptations of which, proved too strong for you. I thought the principles of your heart and your love for me, would enable you to resist what might overcome a frailer mind. Yet the result has not been so. For two years we have been almost divided; the heartless amusements of society have drawn you

from the devoted love of your husband, the caresses of your child, and the pure happiness of domestic life. But now what is it about Arthur? The very idea that you have concealed anything from me is weighing me to the earth. Has he been here, and when?"

Mrs. Elwyn leaned against the mantle-piece while her husband was speaking, and she had become as white as the marble. "I deserve all you have charged me with," she said, "but if I concealed Arthur's visit from you, it was because I thought it would do no good to tell you when it was too late. Through me, through my selfishness, Arthur went away from this house, without even knowing Ada was here. You may blame me as much as you choose. I have no wish to excuse myself; you cannot blame me more than I deserve."

"How was it?" Mr. Elwyn asked, in an impatient tone of voice.

"I was expecting Mrs. Le Roche every moment (for I had promised to go to several places with her) when Arthur came, and he had only been in the house a few minutes when the carriage drove up to the door. Arthur was speaking of his being obliged to earn his living now, and said something of an effort in connection with the sale of books and periodicals. Mrs. Le Roche kept sending in word

she could not wait, and I apologized to Arthur for not being able to remain with him."

"You did not leave him to go out with that silly woman?" interrupted Mr. Elwyn.

"Yes," said Mrs. Elwyn. "I left him, and hurried up after my bonnet, intending to speak with him when I came down; but when I got back, he was gone. I sent John to look for him, but he was not to be found. I would have gone after him myself if I had known which way to go. Oh! if you could have seen how poor and how ill he looked, how thin he was, how shabby his dress, you would understand how guilty I am; but I was thinking of my own pleasure. When I remembered about Ada, I was perfectly miserable. How happy I might have made her and you! I cannot bear to look at Ada, I have so wronged her. Since all this happened, George, I have never had a peaceful moment. Can you ever forgive me?"

"I can easily forgive you," said Mr. Elwyn, "but can you ever forgive yourself when you know"—

"It is not too late," said she. "You know where Arthur is; we can bring him here, and keep him with us. It will make poor Ada so happy, and I am sure Arthur will forgive me, for he could not bear resentment towards me, whom he has always loved as a sister."

"That makes it so much sadder," said Mr. Elwyn,

in a low voice. "He has indeed loved you as a sister, and he will forgive you if—his forgiving spirit has not passed from earth to his father's throne. Sophie," he continued, looking earnestly at his wife, whose attention was fixed by his last expression, "Arthur is dying in one of the poorest, most wretched tenements of this city. We found him, very ill, in a cold, damp room, on a bed that not one of his father's slaves would have been permitted to die on. In this severe weather, he has had no fire, no food, no medicine, no comforts, for he has no money. Poverty, and sickness, and death are too common, in such houses as the one in which Arthur is now dying, to excite surprise or sympathy. For many months, Arthur has been ill, struggling amid pain, and fever, and sorrow to earn his bread; lately, he has been growing so much worse that he could do nothing. I have heard, from people in the house, of his patience, and of all that he has endured, though he tried to conceal it. For some time, he could bury his sufferings in his own bosom, but he has become too weak to hide his burden any more. During the past week, he has been stretched on that miserable bed, waiting to die, for death is his only refuge. But I am talking too long. I came to take Ada to see him once more, and for the last time. He has but one earthly wish, and that is to see her again. Will you go, too?"

"Oh, I cannot!" she said. "It would kill me to see him. What have I done?" Exhausted with emotion, she sunk upon the bed.

"I cannot stay with you now," said Mr. Elwyn, "every moment is precious. Arthur's life is hastening away. Take off this dress and these flowers, and come with me to wake up Ada and prepare her for what she must go through."

"I cannot," she said, covering her face with her hands, and pressing her head against the pillow. "Leave me to myself and you go to Ada."

"Sophie," said Mr. Elwyn, "does not your conscience at this moment accuse you of great neglect and unkindness to an old friend?"

"Oh, yes; what would I give to recall that miserable day!"

"You can do something for him now," said Mr. Elwyn. "Tears are well enough when all is over, but they are worse than useless while there is anything to be done."

"What can I do?"

"I will not ask you to go and see Arthur," said Mr. Elwyn, "for you are so excited and fatigued that you are better at home; try and compose yourself and go wake up Ada, and help her to dress. It is time we were there. If we do not hurry she will never see Arthur alive; and think what a comfort

it will be to speak to him, and to know his last wishes."

Sophie got up at once, when she saw she could really be of use, and changed her dress, to do which, she required some assistance from her husband, she was so much agitated. This accomplished, she went quickly through the hall to Ada's room, gently opening the door, afraid of doing what she came to do.

Ada was in that heavy sleep into which those fall who have been watching or wakeful during the first hours of the night. Sophie called her several times without rousing her. Again she said, "Ada, dear Ada;" this time the sleeper waked at once and turned towards her.

"What *is* the matter?" she exclaimed. "Oh! you have been crying; has anything happened to Mr. Elwyn?"

"No, indeed," said Sophie, "he is at home, safe."

"Is Nannie sick?"

"She is well," said Sophie, hesitating to do her errand, "but Ada, Mr. Elwyn is in the hall waiting to speak to you. May he come in?"

"Yes, but Sophie, what *can* be the matter? Mr. Elwyn," as he entered in answer to his wife's call, "what kept you out? how pale you look! something is wrong—please tell me!"

"Can't you think on what subject I want to

speak with you, dear Ada; you know who has been the object of our most anxious thoughts and inquiries?"

"Arthur! Oh! Mr. Elwyn, tell me about Arthur; you have heard of him, I know." She clasped her hands in the earnestness of her entreaty.

"I have seen him, Ada, and—"

"You have seen him, and he knows I am here?"

"Oh! yes."

"And he will come to me?"

"You must go to him, dearest Ada!"

"Oh God! he is dead!" and she sunk back on the pillow.

"No, not dead! you mistook my meaning," said Mr. Elwyn; "but he is very ill, Ada, and wants you to go to him. Can you bear to do so? Are you strong enough to see him in great sickness and suffering, and under the most afflicting circumstances? If so, Sophie will help you dress, for we have no time to lose."

"I see it all," said Ada; "he is dying; you need not tell me any more, I will be ready."

Mr. Elwyn left her, and, with Sophie's assistance, but a few moments were required to make her arrangements. At first, Sophie could not restrain her tears, her friend's pallid face was so full of woe; but Ada's calmness controlled her, and she quietly helped her to dress. When she was ready, Ada

threw herself on her knees, by the bedside, only for a moment, and then hurried to join Mr. Elwyn, who was walking in the hall. Sophie followed her to the foot of the steps, where Mr. Elwyn stood when he heard them coming. He turned from Ada to his wife—"Go and lie down by Nannie, and try and get a little sleep," he said.

She drew him aside from Ada; "Tell Arthur," she said, "that I loved him, though I treated him so unkindly; and beg him to forgive me."

"He will! he has!" said her husband; "as soon as he breathes his last, dearest, I will bring Ada home, and you can be everything to her, now she is so desolate. Go out of this cold air." He left her, and went with Ada to the carriage, and giving the coachman the direction, he told him to drive rapidly on.

It was now daybreak, and the weather was intensely cold. The streets were quite deserted, as they rode through them, square after square, where the luxurious dwellings of the rich towered in the gray light. Mr. Elwyn drew Ada's furs around her, and expressed his fears lest she should take cold. The kindness of his voice and manner overcame her, and she burst into tears; it was better that they should flow unrestrained, and Mr. Elwyn did not disturb her. She first broke the silence.

"He is dying, you say, Mr. Elwyn, and you may

think that is all I need know; but where has he been all this time? and how is it that we could not hear of him?"

"He has been in New York, Ada, as I always thought; when he came here from Alabama, he commenced teaching French and Spanish, and got along for a while, but his health failed rapidly; he has been sick for a long time, and has suffered a great deal; you must be prepared to see a sad change in him. Illness and poverty have done their work."

"But think of his not calling upon us," said Ada, still weeping. "Oh! how glad we would have been to serve him!"

"Assuredly! dear Ada, but Arthur's pride made him averse to asking favors. When he grew so ill that he was unable to do anything for himself, and being entirely without money, his clothes were sold to meet his wants. I should not tell you all this, were it not my duty to prepare you for the situation in which you will find him. We got the first intelligence of him, through a young man who learned French of him, though he had lately lost sight of him. All yesterday morning, we spent trying to hear something more. We went to the house where he lived when he took pupils; he had left a good impression there, and the people told us all they knew; it was not much, but it prompted us to seek

further. I need not go into all the particulars of our search; at three o'clock we came to a large, but ordinary boarding-house, where we learned he had been, though he had left there, too, and was lying ill, somewhere in the neighborhood; this information, as you know, was not calculated to make us give over our search; we went from house to house in the square to which we were directed, until we found him, and were told at the door that he was very low. I asked for the person who kept the house, and inquired of her the particulars of his condition. She said he was very ill, and had been so for a long time; that he had no physician, and in fact, that he had no money for anything. She added she had done what she could for him; but that she was very poor, and had a number of children. We asked her to show us to his room, first telling her to supply everything that he might want from this time, and we would be responsible for the payment of such expenses as he had incurred, or might incur. She led us to his chamber, where, dear Ada! it is of no use to conceal anything from you, we found our much loved Arthur in a dying state. I will not describe the wretchedness of his room, you will see it for yourself, but I must tell you how he received me.

"Mr. Read and I stood for a few moments by the bed, after we went in, for Arthur was asleep, or, at

least, his eyes were closed. A slight attack of coughing, followed by gasping and struggling for breath, roused him to full consciousness. He looked at us, and at first seemed confused, turning, as if in inquiry, to the landlady.

"'Arthur, my dear friend!' said Mr. Read, 'don't you know us?'

"'Ah yes!' said Arthur, his face brightening up with pleased emotion; 'and you too, George,' turning to me. 'I see I am not forgotten.'

"I told him how long we had been looking for him, and of the many anxious fears we had suffered on his account, but he was so weak that I was almost afraid to talk to him; I stood by him a little while, and then left him, with Mr. Read sitting by him, holding his hand; I wanted to see the landlady again. I asked her what he had eaten that morning. 'Nothing;' she had taken a cup of tea to him and he had drank half. 'I could not do much for him,' said the poor creature, 'it is hard for me to keep myself and children from starvation. I am losing now the rent of the room he is in, though I have told him not to trouble himself about *that*, he was welcome. He'll not be in my way long.' Of course I assured her she should lose nothing, and that I would amply remunerate her for any further trouble and expense; that she might not be afraid to trust me, I gave her twenty dollars for what she

had already done, or rather towards the payment of the debt. I spoke to a youth who was lounging about the premises, and asked him to go for Dr. Rodgers, and that if he could not find him, to go, without any delay, for another physician, mentioning one or two others, promising him a dollar as soon as he came back with one. I mention these particulars that you may feel certain I did all that could be done under these distressing circumstances, though I saw we could only supply Arthur with comforts; nothing, dear Ada, can restore him to us.

"Knowing something of the symptoms, and of the treatment of a patient in the last stages of consumption, I sent to Stevens' for some of his best wine, and set the good-hearted woman, who had sheltered Arthur, to making some broth, of which he took a little. Then I went back to the sick room and made up the fire. I found Arthur coughing desperately, and oh! how he suffered in the gasping for breath that followed. Mr. Read raised him on the pillow at first, and then getting on the bed himself, supported Arthur's head on his breast. Arthur seemed much relieved by the change of attitude. When I went up to the bed, he smiled, and offered me his hand. 'God has sent friends to administer to me in my latest need,' he whispered; 'I thank him.' His manner was very solemn.

"A moment after, the woman came in with more

wood, that she threw on. Arthur watched the flame as it rose up, and then said to me, 'This is your work, George, and I will not object, for it is a pleasure to you to take care of me.' But every time that he spoke the coughing came on, so I asked him not to talk, and I would tell him of all of his friends.

"'First of Ada,' he said.

"I told him all; of your unchanging attachment to him; your coming to New York in the hope of meeting him; your sorrow and disappointment in not hearing of him; of the death of your mother, and of your wish to share with him the large fortune that you owned. He was much affected, and showed evident surprise at hearing of your mother's death. He said he had been averse to troubling any of his friends, though he knew they would be glad to serve him; he confessed that pride, too much pride, had urged him to keep his secret. When he spoke of you his eyes filled with tears, and his voice almost failed him. I begged him to be silent, and told him that we could guess all his wishes. I told him I knew that you would come to him as soon as you heard of his illness. 'Oh! yes,' he said, 'once more, once more! but this room, this house!' I knew he did not like to bring you to such a place, but told him *that* was a small thing compared to the

consolation it would be to you to see him, and I added, a physician would soon be here.

"He exclaimed, 'too late!' but I insisted upon his being quiet, for I saw that excitement was wearing him away; he closed his eyes and appeared to try and compose himself, but the gasping spells came on so dreadfully that I was afraid he would expire before Dr. Rodgers came.

"They told me the doctor was in the house, and I went down to explain to him the circumstances under which he would see Arthur; imagine his amazement when he found who was to be his patient, in this miserable house, for he attended Mr. Mason in all his sickness, and thought, as every one else did, that he was very wealthy. We went up to see Arthur, who knew him immediately, though he did not speak. The doctor gave him some of the wine that I had sent for, and everything that could be done, was done. We stayed with him all the afternoon and night, thinking each hour would be his last, for the coughing and hemorrhage increased so that he did not speak all through the night. Towards morning he began to revive, in consequence of the stimulants Dr. Rodgers gave him; he seemed much better, though the doctor assured me it was only by a miracle that he could last twelve hours.

"When this change for the better took place, he beckoned to me, and said, 'Ada.' I told the doctor,

in explanation, that I had promised to go for you. He said that any excitement might bring on the spells of coughing again, but that he could, under the circumstances, make no objection to Arthur's seeing you. I thought I ought to run the risk, and so, dear Ada, I have brought you to this sad place. I feel for you most sincerely; but though it will be very distressing for you to see Arthur now, yet after the first grief is over, it will be a comfort to you to have been with him in his last moments."

Ada had been afraid of losing one word of Mr. Elwyn's account, but as it closed, she wept very much, though she exerted herself to be calm when Mr. Elwyn told her they were driving up to the house. A wretched house it was! Ada looked up at it; with the rapidity of thought, she went, far away, to her home in the South, Arthur's birthplace, and her own, and the scene of their happy childhood. Born heir to a large estate, nurtured with the fondest care, in this old building was dying the object of so much affection and solicitude. Such a reflection glanced through Ada's mind as Mr. Elwyn was leading her up the broken porch, and into the house; but she nerved herself to bear the worst, and Mr. Elwyn whispered words of sympathy and encouragement.

As Mr. Elwyn reached the hall-door, and pushed it open, he saw the landlady, who was already stir-

ring about at her work. She came forward to meet them, and, as in answer to Mr. Elwyn's look, said, "He is alive, sir, but he can't last long. Walk in, ma'am; it is very cold. I have no fire yet to ask you to warm yourself by, but there is a good one in his room; he needed it long before he had it." She led the way up the stairs, and stopped before the chamber door.

Ada's heart beat so that she feared she would not be able to command herself enough to go in. She went a few steps further down the hall, and proposed that Mr. Elwyn should leave her to collect herself; he consented, saying that he would go and prepare Arthur for her coming. He went in, and she continued walking up and down the cold, uncarpeted boards of the hall, praying silently but fervently for strength to meet this hour. Her prayer was heard; in a few moments the storm in her breast subsided. There was a calm; Jesus had said to the winds and waves, be still!

Mr. Elwyn found Arthur panting and gasping after another frightful spell of coughing. His eyes were shut, and Mr. Read and Dr. Rodgers, who had just come in, were watching him, in prospect of the dying struggle. But it was not quite here; the breath came with less effort, and in a few minutes the gasping and coughing entirely ceased. Mr. Elwyn saw the change of a few hours; deep shadows

were settling under the eyes and mouth, and the whiteness of the forehead was, if possible, more dazzling. He turned away, and asked himself how he could have brought that poor girl to witness such a scene. He could not but blame himself, for what comfort could she have in seeing Arthur speechless, and unable to move? It had been better to wait until all was over; he almost determined to go to her, and induce her to go home, lest Arthur should die in an agony that would impress itself upon her heart, as the chief recollection of him. He approached Dr. Rodgers, and asked, whispering, if there were any material change. The doctor bowed, and closed his eyes. "Ada was come; should he bring her in?" Arthur himself answered the question; he had caught the sound of her name. He opened his eyes, looked at Mr. Elwyn, and said, "Where is she?"

"She is in the house," said the doctor. "Shall Mr. Elwyn bring her in?" He bowed, and an expression of satisfaction passed over his face; he watched Mr. Elwyn, who went to the door, and presently returned, but not alone.

Ada glided into the room. Looking towards the bed, she stopped suddenly, appalled at what she saw; her most vivid fears had not prepared her for the reality, but she recovered her self-possession,

knowing that her own feelings must now be forgotten. She timidly approached, and stood by Arthur.

There they were, face to face—these early friends. The dying man was not paler than the poor girl, who now realized, for the first time, that she must give him up. Sickness and want had not brought to his face the unutterable woe, that the comprehension of his situation threw into hers. She looked at him curiously, as if saying, "Can this be true?" The answer was before her. She clasped her hands tightly over her bosom, looked up to God, and then knelt down beside the lover of her infancy, her childhood, and her youth.

"Arthur," she said, and her voice was like the low cadence of distant and melancholy music, "I have loved you as never woman loved before; had I known you were ill, I would have nursed you so faithfully! yet you did not call me to you. I do not reproach you, but I want to assure you before we part, that next to God, you have been, and are, most dear to me; most dear, since that happy time when your mother taught us both to pray. Oh! my soul has so clung to the hope of meeting you again, and now we meet only to part forever." She laid her head on the pillow, by him, clasped his hand with both of hers, and looked in his face. Dr. Rodgers turned away from the affecting spectacle, and the old friend of these young people sobbed

aloud, while Mr. Elwyn watched Arthur's expressive face, to see how, in his latest moments, he bore a parting, from which man in the fullest health and vigor would have shrunk.

Strength was given him. The faintest tinge of color overspread his dying countenance. "Not forever," he said, "Ada, beloved one!" These words, distinctly uttered, were all that he attempted. Ada raised her head, then, standing up, waited as if expecting him to say more; but it was all. He lifted his arm and pointed upwards; a smile most heavenly passed over his face, to which, alas! an ashy paleness succeeded.

Mr. Elwyn leaned against the bed, and took to his bosom the head that was to ache no more.

The other friends, in silence, gathered closely around him. The awful moment was approaching; the herald of the King of Terrors had announced his coming, but gently had the summons fallen upon the ear that was awaiting it. Arthur looked up to Mr. Elwyn, as if in gratitude to the faithful friend whose breast was his last earthly support, glanced towards the doctor and Mr. Read, and slightly bowed —then his eye fixed upon Ada. Fading as was its brightness, love, unchanging, undying, beamed from its very depths; such love as is born on earth to live forever in heaven. Ada replied to this look, with one of the fondest affection; then Love, eter-

nal, everlasting Love—passing the love of woman—triumphed over this mighty sorrow. Ada said, softly but distinctly, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

"And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die."

Arthur heard the glorious verse; his look expressed full recognition of its import. Ada was silent now, for Arthur's lips murmured, but only one word; it was "Jesus." He breathed it forth with his latest sigh—and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

FASHION AND DEATH.

Oh! coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!

LET her alone; do not force her away yet. He is at rest, but alas for her! Is it not fearful to see two souls separated, that have together grown?

They are all weeping; the doctor, so used to death-scenes, the old man, the devoted friend, even that poor woman, whose heart is almost hardened with the struggle for her own and her children's bread, she is weeping aloud. "Let her alone," she says; "do not force her away yet." Oh! woman, seared by poverty and association with vice, this scene has softened your heart! Weep for Ada, and for yourself, and for your sex. Let your tears flow on; the lot of woman, so often the victim of love of gold, of station, of the world, deserves them all.

Draw her away gently, but firmly; it is enough. She has kissed, again and again, the pale lips and

the paler brow. Earth claims her rights—the body to the ground, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

"Ada," said Mr. Elwyn, putting his arm around her, "you must come now." But still she clung there. Mr. Read spoke to her, "Ada, my poor girl, he is happy; let us pray that we may one day join him." He kneeled down by the corpse, and they all followed him; the woman, who had not prayed for years, hesitated, and then kneeled too, and every word of that old man's prayer was written in her heart by some angel hand—that prayer so short and fervent. When it ceased, Ada once more bent her head, pressed her lips upon the white forehead, then turned to Mr. Elwyn. She was ready to go, and he led her towards the door; but she turned again, looked at the silent form, then raised her glance to Mr. Elwyn; he understood it. "I will take you home, Ada, and then I shall come back to have our dear friend removed to our house; he will not be left alone. Mr. Read will stay here until my return." Ada lingered a moment; it was the last look, and then she left the room. Mr. Elwyn put on her cloak, and the landlady offered to assist her uncertain steps to the carriage.

Ada, with that forgetfulness of herself that had always been a lovely point in her character, took the woman's hand. "You sheltered him," she said, "when he was in want of shelter and of friends.

Dying, he asked Mr. Elwyn to repay you, and to thank you. I can pay you in money for what you gave him, but I can never thank you as you deserve. May God reward you."

"Oh, it's little that I did!" said the woman, "but God knows that I was willing to do more if I had had the money. It was a poor place for him to die in, and he suffered enough, but he never complained. I knew he was used to better than I could do for him, and I told him he ought to let some of his friends know of his sickness, but he said, 'No;. it will only be for a little while.'" Mr. Elwyn drew Ada away to the carriage, and ordered the driver to hurry home. Now the city was alive; men and women were passing in every street, but Ada was not conscious of any difference between the bustle of the morning and the still hum of night, when she went forth with throbbing heart. It was over! Her mind was dwelling on that look, which rewarded her for all that she had suffered; she felt this, even in the first hours of her grief.

Mrs. Elwyn met them at the door; she had seen the carriage drive up, and could hardly wait to hear the tidings her husband might bring. Oh, if Arthur would but recover, how much she would do to make up for her cruel neglect! She had lived months in the last few hours. She slept a little while by her child, for she could not lie down alone in her own

room; every thought was a spectre of death or of the grave; lying in the hearse, or wrapped in the pall, Arthur's melancholy face and attenuated form were always before her. But still she hoped he might get well, for persons who had been thought dying had recovered, and she called to mind those who were considered dead, and had revived, to live for years.

Most slowly passed the anxious hours. As she could not sleep, she tried to occupy herself by arranging her wardrobe and her jewel-case, offices always left to her maid; but she soon threw the dresses and laces by, and closed her jewel-case in disgust. In her desire that Arthur might recover, she thought of prayer, but God had been so completely forgotten—his name, except in blasphemy or thoughtlessness had not even been mentioned in the scenes of the last few years, and she could not feel that she had prayed from her velvet footstool in church—*that* was, with her, all mockery.

Her husband's countenance told her the tidings as he met her; then he whispered, "Ada is more than ever our sister; *now* she has none but us." She had no time to answer, for, looking in Ada's face, she saw her very faint. Mr. Elwyn perceived it at the same moment, and he lifted her to the lounge in the sitting-room. She was quite insensible when she was laid there, and it was some minutes before they

could restore her to consciousness. Sophie sat down by her, and wept bitterly. Ada might have envied her those tears, her own grief was so silent and so terrible.

Mr. Elwyn asked his wife to order some coffee at once, for he was obliged to go away again, and he hoped Ada would drink some. Then he motioned her to follow him to the other room.

He hesitated, as if about to propose something that might not be acceptable to her; then he said, "There is but one thing we can do now for Arthur, and for Ada. I am sure you will, to the utmost of your power, console Ada, but I know your great timidity as regards everything connected with death; I hope you will not give way to this, for I intend to have Arthur removed here as soon as possible, that he may be buried from this house."

"Oh, heavens! no!" said Mrs. Elwyn, in violent agitation. "You certainly do not mean to bring him here. Have some pity on me, and don't bring that dead body to the house. When he was alive, his face haunted me, and I, who might have saved his life, how can I see him dead? Oh, don't bring him here!"

"I am ashamed to see you give way to this superstitious dread," said Mr. Elwyn. "It is indeed true that you might have been the means of saving his life, but that is past. He died a lingering death,

without ordinary comforts until he was so far gone that he could not be benefited by them. In all his sufferings, no physician, no food, no friend to care for him! Oh, my wife, you ought to have heard that racking cough! You ought to have seen the blood oozing from his mouth! the heaving of his skeleton chest! the unnatural glare in his once soft and beautiful eyes! With all this, you ought to have heard him say to Ada one word, the name of Jesus, a name that we have, by our life, despised. You ought to have seen his head sink upon my bosom at the last; then you would have realized what you have done. I don't wonder that you shudder at the thought of his being brought here in a coffin."

Mr. Elwyn's voice failed, and he could not restrain his tears; his wife was shocked to see him in grief, for all their married life had been so gay, if not so happy. She was awed at the thought of death within her own doors, and a kind of horror overcame her, so that she could not answer her husband. He saw this, and said, "Sophie! Arthur was your friend in your happiest days; how often you have visited him in his father's house, where he could command every attention, as the only child of a good and wealthy man. You have seen him much admired in the most select circles of our society. But in the course of human events, he became poor;

he asked of you, at your door, the common offices of charity; you denied them. Much as I feel for you, I will not deny the grief that I feel at the remembrance of your selfish conduct, but I will say no more of that; your own reflections will, some time or other, condemn you. Sophie! your friend, he whom you once loved, whom, I know by your tears, you still love, is no more; his body lies in the abode of poverty; he died under a shelter given him by a destitute woman. Had you seen the forlorn aspect of that miserable house, its unfurnished rooms, its tottering walls falling into decay; had you seen those who have been living under the same roof with one who was so intellectual, so refined—oh! conquer this superstitious terror that would deny to the remains of a friend the last sad burial rites."

"Oh! no," said Mrs. Elwyn, "but, I dread to see a coffin come in the house; to have death so close to me."

"It must come closer still, and I would be glad if I thought you and I would be as ready to meet it as poor Arthur was. Now I must go; take good care of Ada."

"When will you be back?"

"As soon as I can make the arrangements."

"George," said Mrs. Elwyn, after a moment of thought, "did you ask his forgiveness for me?"

"There was no time, he was failing so fast."

They went back to Ada, whom they found sitting up with Nannie in her arms, and weeping violently. The kisses of the child had softened the first hard grief. Nannie looked surprised, but was quiet, until her mother sat down by Ada and wept with her; then the little girl held out her arms to her nurse, frightened at the display of feeling that she could not understand. Mr. Elwyn brought Ada a cup of coffee, that she drank, in compliance with his request; Mr. Elwyn drank his and hurried away. Then Mrs. Elwyn persuaded Ada to go to her room, and lie down; but she could not rest, and got up again to walk about the room, after stopping at the window to look for what Mrs. Elwyn dreaded to see. Thus passed the day. Mrs. Elwyn never left her, and wept continually. Towards evening, Mr. Elwyn and some other gentlemen, in a carriage, accompanying the hearse containing all that remained of Arthur Mason, stopped at the door. Ada, though she had watched and waited for it, shrunk from the sight; Sophie, trembling, turned away too. To her, the night that followed was one long to be remembered.

All through the evening were heard low voices and careful steps; they were covering the furniture and making the usual preparations. Very late, the house became still, though, occasionally, a soft step was heard. Two gentlemen, acquaintances of Ar-

thur, of whose death Mr. Elwyn had informed them, sat up with him. Mr. Elwyn, quite worn out, slept heavily all night; even Ada slept, as is often the case with those who are stunned with grief. An old servant woman, who had always lived with Sophie, having nursed her in her infancy, slept in the room with Ada, but she was far more anxious about her mistress, who was wandering from her own to Ada's room, and to whom this night was a period of intense thought and suffering. That silent form below was speaking awful words to the woman of fashion; words of reproach and of warning. She envied her husband his tranquil repose; she envied Ada her heavy stupor, for there was too much sorrow in that young face to call it sleep; she shrunk from looking towards that part of the house where the corpse lay, and yet a strange fascination impelled her to go down, to uncover the face, and look at it; it was once a fair face to look upon, what was it now? Oh! would her own, ere long, change so? would she lie so helpless and so quiet while others watched and wept? She conjured up a thousand horrors, yet towards morning she fell asleep, to dream of a great assembly where all was splendor and display, but ever the faces were changing as she looked at them, turning white and death-like, so that she was glad to awake and see the sunshine.

Her first thought was for Ada, who was very

calm; Sophie wished she might see her weep, it would be better than to sit so quietly, looking desolate. Mr. Elwyn tried to persuade her to see Arthur now that all was as it should be; he said the face was far more pleasant to look at than before death. "But," she said; "I do not wish to see him in his coffin; I would rather remember him living, as he was before God brought upon him such accumulated sorrows. I am not unreconciled; at least, I desire to say, 'Thy will be done.' One of these days, I will visit his grave; it will be a pleasure to recall his early piety, the purity of his life, and the triumphant death that he died."

"Ada," said Mr. Elwyn; "how do you reconcile what the Bible says of God's love to his people, with Arthur's sufferings—with his dying under circumstances so aggravated. Born to wealth, think of his coming to die destitute of everything!"

"Jesus was the Son of God," said Ada solemnly; "heaven was his throne, earth his footstool, yet he gave up his mortal life on the Cross, and in the company of thieves. I try to forget all connected with Arthur's dying hour—all but his pleasure in seeing me, and the faith that supported him so effectually; in all his suffering, Jesus was very near; that wretched bed was 'soft as downy pillows are.' Now he is comforted. He walks the golden streets. He bends before the Throne. He talks with Christ, and

with the prophets and martyrs, of mysteries that he could not comprehend here."

Very sad were the tones of Ada's voice as she spoke; she was offering herself a consolation for which nature was hardly prepared. Jesus wept, and so must we.

Sophie was induced by her husband to go and look upon the face of their lost friend; the calm expression she saw there, soothed her mind from its unnatural terror, but while her feelings were softened, her tears flowed. She knew that he had forgiven her; pardon was written on those marble features, yet, not less severe were the reproaches of her heart; the world had left something within that was good.

They were glad when they saw Ada give way to what she could no longer control—the violence of grief. When she heard, for she would not see the slow departure of the funeral train, it said to her, now indeed he is gone, and like Martha and Mary she was ready to exclaim, "If thou hadst been here."

The circumstances of Arthur's death made a lasting impression on Mr. Elwyn's mind, that had long been seriously disposed. Ada's society and grief deepened the influence. He added another one to the many devoted and energetic Christians, who are carrying on God's work in New York. Ada divides her time with the Elwyns and some

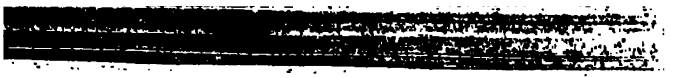
friends at the south; she lives a life of zealous devotion to the interests of religion.

Nor was Mrs. Elwyn's mind unmoved by what so deeply affected others. The world never willingly gives up its claim on one who has been subjected to its bondage, but the woman of fashion was induced to think. Her selfishness, and its painful consequences to Arthur, often came back to her, and always brought tears with the remembrance. Her husband's energetic piety, Ada's unostentatious usefulness, the budding forth of the sweet dispositions of her child, were talismans to draw her to reflection. It is rarely that a steady example of a holy life, such as was shown by Ada or Mr. Elwyn, is without an influence. God works by mysteries; his ways are unfathomable, yet secret as are his purposes, he brings to himself his own. If it be his voice we hear in the deafening thunder, it is his love that we recognize in the beauty of the smallest flower. Small things we may consider many of the means that he uses to arrest the soul in its carelessness. A dream, a word fitly spoken, the meeting of a funeral train in the street, have in many cases been the instruments that God has used to bring man to Himself.

It is not, then, without reason, that Mrs. Elwyn's friends hope that God's spirit may yet draw her away from an inordinate love of fashionable amuse-

ments. It would be afflicting indeed, if in looking round at the number of women, lovers of pleasure rather than of God—most appalling would be the thought that He who said, "Ye cannot love God and mammon," would finally condemn *all* of these to eternal banishment from his presence.

"By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is a-weary of this great world."



CHAPTER XLIX.

YOUTH.

WERE I a poet, I would write a dirge; a requiem for my youth. For it is dead and still unburied. No pall of velvet conceals it from my sight; over and around it seems to flutter a gossamer veil. Memory pierces this gauze-like texture. Every feature is distinct; the form is most graceful in its repose. Yet there is a barrier between us, and on it is written in iron symbols, Nevermore; I look beyond this barrier and weep. Would I approach? the vision recedes noiselessly, the veil floats over it. I call upon it to return. "Oh beautiful youth! come again." There is no voice. Gone! dead! and yet, oh! world-worn heart! what pleasure now so great as to contemplate it.

What has made that bar that stands between me and my former self? It is Time. Ah! the wretch! "He sows canker into hearts of rosebuds, and writes wrinkles (which are his odious attempts at pot-hooks) in the loveliest of female faces." And

something better, oh, opium eater! thou hast said of a happiness and glory that once and forever has perished. So it is with my youth.

Tell me, thou vision, peaceful and fair, beautiful youth! wherefore the pang that thou art no more?

"With me departed, forever, perfect confidence and trust, all sweet reliance on others, all faith in man and woman. When my brow paled, the mantle of innocence fell from thy shoulders; in its place thou hast wrapped about thee a cloak to hide from the world the unquiet heart, that while I lived had no secrets. My eyes closed, and no more thine looked out for the glory and beauty of the passing day; for, clouded by beholding the contest, and tear dimmed, they fail to look up hopefully, bending their glances upon the earth. The color faded from my cheek; and upon thine, no longer thought writes, with rose-tinted ink, now dyeing with the deepest hue, now fading into the faintest blush. The breath went out from my nostrils, and from the altar of thine heart never more could arise aspirations pure as the breath of dewy morn, that the stag inhales, and throws back his head to enjoy its fragrance. Closed were my lips; and thine—Oh! they have learned the language of the world! Sweet words they utter —enticing talk, such as we hear in the prattle of the rivulet as it winds its way, and as meaningless. My heart gently throbbed itself to rest; and thine?"

I am answered. Yet I am content, Oh! glorious youth! to have thee in remembrance. There are those for whom the past has no such picture. My youth revelled for a while, then serenely floated away. Its contemplation is, to me, as are to the child, the gorgeous wings of the butterfly. I bear its memory in my bosom, as does a mother her first born.

But answer once more, days of my youth! couldst thou not dwell with me a little longer? Thou wert the minutest grain in the hour-glass. As in the rose, I

> The common fate of all things rare,
> May read in thee;
> How small a part of time they share,
> That are so wondrous sweet and fair.

CHAPTER L.

PICTURES FROM LIFE.

THERE are those who were shrouded in their youth. I remember one, whom I saw for the last time, as she stood gazing at her own picture; her voice, sweet and low and trembling, slowly enunciated these questions: "Is it like me? is the countenance cheerful?" Then she murmured to herself, "I tried to look happy. Oh! my mother!"

She was very young, hardly, I should judge from her appearance, past seventeen. Her forehead was low, and her glossy black hair was pushed away from it, and arranged in great luxuriance, on the back of her head. It waved in satin masses, and the carelessness, but taste with which its owner had twined it around a small comb that supported its weight, made it a great ornament. The dark eyebrows, it may be, were a shade too heavy, and while the young lady looked down at the picture, I noticed the long sweep of her eyelashes, and the general cast of her features. They were not regu-

lar, but they were far from being indifferent, yet their beauty was in the expression. Her cheek was pale; but the countenance and the full handsome bust indicated health. She was standing by an arm-chair, behind which, her white arms resting on its carved back, was a very fair girl. She, too, was looking at the picture.

I could not turn away from them. It was a charming group upon which the eyes and mind might rest. Once more the young lady said to her friend, "Tell me if the face looks natural and cheerful?"

As she spoke, she raised her eyes to read the answer, that was not readily uttered. Perhaps it was because I was looking so intently at her, that, for a moment, she fixed her gaze upon me, as she looked up—only for a moment—yet I can never forget that impressive look. In the depths of those dark eyes dwelt—what was it, a joy? Oh! no. Deeper was the darkness of her eyes from the long lashes that curtained them, but there was a softness, a melancholy sweetness in them that fascinated me. I was sure there was some cause in that young heart for the twilight beauty of the face. I longed to ask if sorrow had already fallen on one so young. If—

But she was gone, while I looked upon her. Soon an acquaintance joined me. "Did you observe," she asked, "the young lady that just left the room?

She has had her likeness taken for her mother. She will, to-morrow, take the white veil, for she is going to be a nun."

Oh! could it be that such was the sad destiny of that young creature? Health, and beauty, and youth, and all youth's graces—were these to be crushed by the gloomy life of the cloister? Was that beautiful hair, woman's glory, to be cut off, cast aside, and trampled upon? Were those eyes to close to the lovely visions of earth? those ears to shut out the music of the voices of friends, the harmony of life, forever? Was that form to be enclosed in the mock sanctity of the nun's garment, that brow to be shadowed by the heavy veil, the funereal badge of a living death? Were all the love, and genius, and thought, that met in the wondrous depths of those eyes, were they to be as—

> "When the lamp is shattered,
> The light in the dust lies dead?"

Was that sweet voice to be heard no more in its once happy home? I could have wept as these sad thoughts passed rapidly through my mind, and one who stood near, as if reading their import, repeated —"Poor girl! she is going to be a nun."

And will she ever awake from this dream, that even now bewilders her? How full of meaning were her own words—"I tried to look cheerful and

happy." Already the mask presses against the soul it would hide, as it struggles to illume or to sadden the ingenuous face of youth. The effort of her life is truly to commence. Farewell to any real enjoyment! *it will be required of her, "to try and look happy."*

But not, oh! maiden, for the sake of the mother who has so tenderly reared thee, who bore thee on her bosom in infancy, who hoped to have guided thy joyous youth, and to have been cheered by thy society in her fading years! Thou wilt make the last return for all her affection, when thou shalt place in her hands the transfer of thy sweet, sad features. Thou hast not, as did thy Redeemer, with his last breathings, provided for a mother's comfort; thou hast deserted her. Hereafter, in sickness and in sorrow, another voice than thine will cheer her, another hand administer to her need. Thou, in thy solitary, cheerless cell, wilt one day wake from thine illusion, clasp thy rosary, and look back, sorrowing, to the time when, ere seeking thine own pillow, thou, resting thy head beside hers, pressed upon her lips a loving good-night. Ah! the remorse that will lengthen those gloomy days! the penances and prayers that will be performed in vain, through those dreary nights! There will be no friend near, then, to bear to that mother a wish to return. Yet, as now, thou wilt try to look happy, until the grave

will enclose thee and thy strange secret in its unyielding embrace forever.

* * * * * *

Does she still live? Hast heard, my reader, of being buried alive? Such a fate is hers. Not in the earth; in that darker sepulchre—the cloister.

Another I remember who was shrouded in her youth; her name was Eunice. So dazzling fair was her brow, that a star might have lived where, when dressed for the festival, a diamond ever flashed. Most beautiful she was; and, alas! motherless. Her father, the cold, calculating statesman, saw, in her rare beauty, the means of binding to his party, at some future day, a partisan, unscrupulous as himself. The time delayed, a little, its coming, and Eunice was too busy dancing in the sunshine, to dream of night. Yet it overtook her, and her heart meekly disrobed itself of its shining garments.

For she had loved, as so it may come to man or woman but once in a lifetime; too well, for society had a law, as her father, who was a lawyer, interpreted it, that forbade the classes to swerve from the conventional line. Her blood was noble in a republican land, and *his* was noble, too, flowing from so noble a heart. *This* was his sin—his ancestors had toiled. Hers was the aristocracy of blood; his, the aristocracy of labor and of intellect. In the windows of her father's hall, ancient but well preserved,

her grandmother's titled name was carved with a diamond. From his, there was the picture of the green fields, waving with corn, the orchard, and the silver waved spring. I have said *she* was most fair; and on *his* brow the Divine Hand had made its mark; the soul registered *there* its origin.

Of this love I may not speak much; it was so holy, so tender, so true, so fearfully strong.

The statesman who had forgotten his own youth, said, "No. Let them part. She can do better for herself and me. This man has neither wealth nor position. It is true, he has fame. But what is worth the poet's fame?"

The statesman's sister had once shut Love out from her heart, so rudely, that he never again offered to enter, and that heart had withered and grown dark. "Let them part," she said. "Love is a foolish dream, from which she must be awakened; the sooner the better." So they two called her back to life with bitter words. And oh! the awakening!

I heard of her, as with bowed head and unsteady feet, she toiled up the grass-covered streets of the old town, towards the convent hill. Arrived at the gate she paused to rest a moment, then drew the bell. Soon she was admitted to the presence of the priest. Surprised, he looked at her; it had been long since one so fair had crossed that threshold. Did he not divine there was a heart history in the

pale lips and paler cheeks? But he waited for her to speak.

He saw her faint and trembling. Then he asked, "What is it, my daughter? It is our office to console the afflicted, as to guide the erring. I know you, and what trouble can have found you out? Have you been dwelling on the mysteries of our holy religion? Would you come to the bosom of the mother church? she stands ever with open arms to receive her returning children."

"Father," she said, "I am in search of peace. I thought it might be here within these sacred walls. A deep darkness has fallen upon me, and I am groping my way, without a guide. There is a burden here"—and she pressed over her heart a hand like snow—"that I would lay down. Must I go smiling through the world and bear it? Oh! I cannot, I am so weary of the world—weary of my life. Tell me truly, shall I find repose? These women, who are shut up here forever, did they enter sorrowing, and have they found rest?"

"What is your grief?" the father kindly asked. "Have you some sin that you should confess to me? Do not fear, the church is merciful."

"I have not sinned," she said calmly. "I have loved, but they tell me I must forget. There is a band that is pressing tightly here," and again she laid over her heart her jewelled fingers. "It would

be a mockery, a dreadful falsehood for me to stay among the happy and laugh with them. Let me come to you and find rest. As well might I pass the dragging hours in prayer as in endless weeping."

"My daughter," said the priest, "most gladly would we receive you among these holy women, who, abjuring the false pleasures of the world, have given themselves to God. But your father is a Protestant, and he would not consent to our receiving you. You have not the right to decide for yourself, for you cannot be of age. Have you spoken to your father about your wish? Here, in this land, we dare not use the power with which the church arms us."

"Go to him," said Eunice, "and entreat him for me, that I may be quiet for awhile. I would know of a great many things, but first, of the 'Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' Was it not Jesus? and will you tell me of him?"

The father looked at her intently, and he thought, "a wounded spirit who can bear?" Most gently he questioned her, and drew from her the short history of her love. He could but pity her, and, well acquainted with the workings of the heart, he saw the map of her fate drawn out. "Disappointed love!" he said to himself! "it was *that* that first led woman to a convent. Woman's nature is still the same."

But did he tell this poor child of fashion more of

the Jesus whom she desired to see? She was so near the fold, would he not show her the entrance?

Awhile the father considered, then he bade the suppliant return to her house, where he would follow her. He gave her a cross and a rosary, and taught her a prayer to one who was a woman; blessed indeed among women, but frail and sorrowing, once, like herself.

And how ended the conference between the priest and the parent? The priest deprecated offending the great man, but he told him how his daughter had come to the convent gate, and had asked admittance. He said she was ill and melancholy, and it would be good for her to come to them, for a time. The regular life, the varied occupation, the change of scene, might restore her to happiness and health. She would be the charge of the lady Abbess. She would embroider, and play on the harp, with the young nuns. She might ride at her pleasure, or tend the rare flowers that grew in the convent gardens. Many a winning smile, and much courtly grace accompanied the soft entreaties, that closed with a hope of restoring the daughter, cured of her illness, whatever it might be.

"Eunice," said her father, "has a strange fancy for a young man, who, by his genius, we all know. But he is a mere poet, without fortune. Writing verses will not be likely to help him along in this world.

The young man is my daughter's inferior, too, in point of family. There is everything sir, in good blood. Do you not agree with me?"

The Jesuit bowed and smiled, and thus advanced a point.

"Sir," continued the statesman, "I have refused my consent. My child, by her beauty and talents and family influence, is entitled to a more splendid alliance. I have parted them, and I wish her to forget this young man; I have told her so, and in my family, my word is law. Yet I would see her happy, and I cannot deny that she droops; often I find her in tears. Her physician advises a total change of scene. As she wishes, for a time, to stay in your convent, I will not object. Will she be well cared for there? for I fear she is delicate. Of late she has had a cough. Yet, pardon me, I do not want her to become a Romanist."

The Jesuit bowed again. But could he promise this? Place your rose-tree in the rain. Will not its leaves drink up the drops?

So the prayers of the drooping Eunice to her father were heard. He consented that his "star-gemmed lily" should go for awhile, for a few months at most, to the quiet that she coveted.

And now Eunice is shut out from the world. She may weep unmolested. She may withdraw to dream over the past. She may, musing, walk through the

convent halls. She spends hours alone, in her little room. None contradict her; she does according to her will. Sometimes she asks the nuns of the Man of sorrows. They answer her with stories of Mary, who nursed him; legends of Joseph and of the saints. They teach her their vesper songs, and, singing them, she tries to forget. Yet withal, she clings to the past. It is her treasure. Her heart learns no repose. She questions the result of her experiment. These women, robed in garments of sanctity, why should they utter silly jests and gossip, as do the women of the world without? She finds penances and prayers weary her, as did the trivial demands of fashion.

She watched with interest, the nuns who came often to her room to read to her, or to talk. What had led so many to renounce life? to be buried as effectually here, as if they were bricked and plastered up in those cruel niches, the graves of the faithless nuns of old. There was one she longed to question—one with a face of unearthly paleness, with a passionless eye, but with features of such regular beauty. One, who was quiet and graceful, yet on whose lovely face was written despair. One, upon whom there ever rested a stern haughtiness of manner, when the curious eye bent towards her, though she was very gentle in her ways for one so proud; and all loved her.

Once, she came into the room where Eunice lay, suffering from pain and restlessness. "I have brought you some soup, Eunice; try and eat it; it will give you a little strength." Eunice smiled, pleased with the notice taken of her, but, though she raised the spoon to her lips, she could not eat. Gratefully she declined it, and then the nun set it aside, and came back, to place herself by Eunice, on the cot.

"You are very feeble, my poor child," she said gently. "Each day I see that you are failing. It is better so; I know all that brought you here, and therefore, I say, it is better so. Better to burst asunder the chain, and let its links fall to the ground than to bear it, dragging so heavily after you, through many years."

"I came here," said Eunice, "to find peace. Have you found it? for I am sure no happy woman would, by immuring herself within these walls, debar herself from all that makes life valuable."

"Peace," said the nun, bitterly. "Think you there is a heart here without its struggle? Here is *our* world, and here are its bitterness and cares. There are silly women here, without whom society is better off, but such as you and I had died ere we came. Yet take comfort; the grave will soon give you repose. My strong nature rebelled, and braved out the storm, and lives, torn and withered by the

lightning stroke. Yours, frail and delicate, bent with the first token of the blast."

Oh, how Eunice longed to speak! to ask her wherefore she had come, to crave her sympathy. But the nun had resumed her reserved manner, and soon left her.

The statesman came often to his daughter, and grieved to see her pining. He brought physicians to see her now flushed cheeks, and to listen to her racking cough. He said she had better go home, for she had not recovered, as he hoped. But Eunice entreated, "Let me stay a little longer; the roses are still blooming in the convent garden, and the quiet is very sweet to me." She sighed as she said this, for she felt that her coming had been a failure. But she chose to linger, and her father consented that she should remain yet a little while.

And a change came to Eunice. It was not happiness, or even repose, but a resignation to what was irremediable. She was placid outwardly, though the battle was not done within. Yet *she could not help it.* Ah, it is this that acts upon our nature! If we had the power, would we not often contend? Would we not sometimes arm ourselves against God, but for the consciousness of our own weakness? This brings submission. First, we feel the weakness of the mortal; then we recognize the power of the Infinite. Yet this is not enough.

Another change came to her. She did not hear much of the Man of sorrows, but she soon became familiar with the history of the saints. One of the older nuns, a good and kind woman, though ignorant and weak-minded, came to her often in the evening, and told her of the sufferings of the martyrs. From the description of their last agonies, she would pass to the refining fires of purgatory, thence to the glories of Heaven. Woman, naturally devotional, clings, in the hour of her trouble, to thoughts of heaven, and human nature is ever ready to extol what it has suffered and done. Thus, Eunice easily consented to the doctrine that her penances and prayers, and, above all, her tears and sufferings, would gain her heaven. She felt that she had done with life, and present objects and associations had a strong effect upon her mind. Right reverently she kneeled when she passed before the image of Christ; longer she lingered by the statue of Mary. Religious thoughts, in some measure, supplanted the earthly love. There was a superstitious influence constantly at work within her. Had she cast her soul upon Christ, she would have found repose, but she was ever appealing to those who were helpless to save. By day, she read the histories of the saints, and many hours of the night she passed in wearying prayers. She grew reconciled to suffer, as sorrow was the lot of all.

The constant stimulus of mental excitement hurried on her disease. The cough grew harder, and the flush deepened in her cheek. Very feeble she was, as each morning she raised her head from her pillow. She knew what all this meant. Death was at hand. And like a dream was the retrospection of her short life. A little while ago, she was strong and well, and the sun was not bright enough for her. And now? So she folded her hands, and gave herself up to death. And she thought, poor child! heaven was to be won by beads, and prayers, and penances, and fasts.

Again her father came, and now she *must go home.* He blamed himself that he had ever permitted her to immure herself in so gloomy a place. She would surely be better among her old friends, enjoying the gayeties to which she had been accustomed.

But Eunice shuddered at the thought. Accustomed to retirement, to isolation, she shrunk from a change, in her exhausted state. She nerved herself, for the first time in her life, to contend. She *would not* leave the asylum that had been her refuge. For the few weeks or days that remained, let her be quiet. She laid her thin hands on her father's, and besought him to let her die here.

The statesman bowed his head and wept. Could anything belonging to him die? He roused, and asked the physicians to give him hope. They turned

from him without a reply. Then he remembered what would once have made Eunice bound from that couch with a joy above all other earthly joys. So he stooped, and whispered in her ear, "I will write to him, my darling, and tell him to hasten back. Look up; you shall be his. Once I parted you, but there shall be no more separation."

A lovely smile passed over the features of the dying girl. You *shall be his.* Oh! most precious were those words. It was the last earthly dream, and false as all the others. Ah! Earth! Earth! how we cling to the mould of which we are made, and Love!—with what a giant's strength thou holdest us to the last.

The smile is passing away, and mournful eyes are raised to the father's face. The star is falling from the forehead. An expression of pain is over the countenance, and blood oozes from the pale lips.

Once more, in his frantic despair, the statesman speaks to his child. "Eunice, my precious one, I was harsh and unyielding, but come home, and all will be well. You shall be his. Oh! fool that I was to see you pine away before my eyes. Let me clasp you in my arms and take you home."

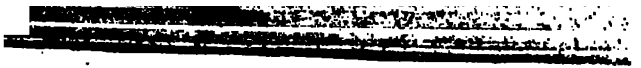
Unseen arms supported her, and a voice, not of this world, called her home. The priest raised before her fading eyes the glittering cross. She saw

it; but looking up, breathed away her fluttering soul.

Has she found the Man of sorrows? Oh! I hope it. In that last upward look, He may have revealed himself to her, He is so merciful. Let us trust her tears are wiped away by the hand once nailed to the cross.

She has gone home.

* * * * *

There are others, there are many living who cannot look back to a joyous youth. Some bore the yoke of sorrow; some struggled through poverty and contention. Some yielded to temptation, and turned away from God. Let us all breathe the prayer, "Oh! remember not the sins of my youth."

But I rejoice in the thought of the early and happy years—that calm, pleasant period of my life. It is gone, but I dash aside my tears. I am content with the years that follow on; with the present that God accords me; for I know that whatever may be in store for me, as I tread over the long grass of summer, seeing in the vista the autumn leaves, I know the spring-time of my life may never come again.